melbourne anarchist archives

DEVELOPMENT OF MELBOURNE ANARCHISM

DRAFTS, DOCUMENTS & ARTICLES 1973-1976

Volume Number 2

Melbourne Anarchist Centre
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Introduction

In the introduction to the first volume of these archives we explained our purpose as follows:-

"This collection of Melbourne Anarchist documents for the period 1966-73 is the first in a series of papers we hope to produce on the history of Australian Anarchism. The object of such a series of publications is not simply that of contributing to the historiography of the Australian left but is rather that of contributing towards the development of the present movement by the critical study of its past. Indeed even to exhibit such a past is to contribute towards the unification of the present movement for many anarchist individuals in Australia are unaware that they form part of a tradition. By identifying this tradition - or strictly those traditions since several streams have come together in the current movement - we give the atomised individuals something to relate to; by criticising this tradition we can do something towards ensuring that our past is behind us.

Both these aspects are important if Australian anarchism is to develop. In the absence of a living tradition to relate to, groups come into existence and die away without there being any overall development in the movement and people enter the movement and develop theoretically and practically within it as individuals without the movement as a whole developing with them. The development of individuals within the movement is thus a prerequisite of the development of the movement but is not identical with it. The development of the movement requires that individual development takes place publicly and is communicated. Communication between individuals and groups separated in space can be facilitated through conferences, interstate visits and internal bulletins; communication between those separated in time can only be done through the study and criticism of our history.

Because as wide a circle as possible - ideally the whole movement - should take part in this critical study it has seemed desirable to publish collections of documents and memoirs of participants where possible rather than imposing upon the reader a finished historical essay with analysis and conclusion but with no data for the reader to arrive at an independent judgement. Some such essays may be published on the early movement but where possible the more recent groups will be treated through the publication of archival material."

Some four years have passed since then and it is doubtful that many anarchists today will have the documents we published. Most of the 125 copies printed were sold to people wanting to learn about anarchism as such rather than about what we regarded as its pre-history. Today the collection is only available in a very few libraries in London, Geneva, Canberra and Melbourne.

A friendly reviewer (Henry Mayer in Politics Vol. X, No. 2) raised the question as to the completeness of our collection for the period covered. The answer is that for what we there called the Melbourne/La Trobe current the collection was almost complete with the only omissions being brief reports or pieces of commentary. On the other hand as we explained there was for various reasons an almost complete exclusion of other currents - chiefly due to their non-literary or non-theoretical focus. (The difference was much more one of style and focus than of ideology.) As yet we have not prepared our supplementary volume on other aspects of Melbourne Anarchism 1966-73 where we hope to make good this omission and include a complete listing of groups and publications for the period 1966-76. The lack of a chronicle of groups complained of by Professor Mayer will for the moment have to be made up for by the partial chronology appended to this Introduction.

II

The focus of the current collection is on the development of the Melbourne/La Trobe current in the period of the Federation of Australian Anarchists (1974-76.) Due to the large amount of material published in this period - in the student press, in leaflets, in magazines such as Red and Black or Acracia and in the movement's internal bulletins FAAB and VRAB - we have largely restricted ourselves to political and theoretical statements and excluded simple commentary or propaganda. As in the previous volume this introduces some distortion; the views of those individuals, groups or tendencies who did not write (the number of writers was in fact very small probably because of the political-theoretical-organisational focus of the Bulletins) tend to be passed over and only appear implicitly as objects of attack. There is no doubt though that there were conflicting views not only within the FAA nationally and within Melbourne anarchism itself but also within the so-called Melbourne/La Trobe current. The majority of those of this current who took part in the formation of the FAA in 1974-75 did not procede on into the Libertarian Socialist Federation when the FAA split in 1976. They chose rather to withdraw from the attempt to create an anarchist organisation, either withdrawing from political activity entirely or working in radical poetry after an initial attempt to form their own discussion/action group between the two national Federations. The remainder, essentially the oldest and youngest members, joined with the older non-campus anarchists in the Libertarian Socialist Federation.

This internal dispute however was not primarily at the theoretical/ideological level. It concerned rather matters of political style and sometimes matters of personality. (It must be admitted that the main figures at La Trobe University saw the FAA project in terms of the construction of a unified anarchist political organisation of serious trained militants and often did not conceal their impatience with those who didn't see it this way.) It also concerned questions more properly of political morality, in particular that of the degree to which anarchists should participate in and use the structures of student government and that of the degree they should use organisational weight and tactics to extract money from the Universities for financing the movement. On these points the group that eventually 'dropped out' held a softer-line, less organisation-building approach. After November 11, 1975 however the relative positions changed: the previously less frenetic saw the Fraser 'coup' as the onset of fascism (!) whilst the organisation builders saw it as opening the opportunity for a long-term strategy by a more reduced group directing itself fundamentally to those outside the anarchist movement. From this perspective would eventually be born the Libertarian Socialist Federation which dropped both in theory and practice the idea of uniting all anarchists in one organisation and also the organisation-building perspective characteristic of the current in the previous period.

After this current volume on the development of Melbourne Anarchism in the FAA period 1974-76 we envisage publishing:

a volume of documents of the Victorian Region Anarchists: minutes of meetings, internal discussion papers, discussions on the anarchist press

a volume on Melbourne anarchism in the Libertarian Socialist Federation 1976-78

a volume on Melbourne anarchist groups, publications and activities 1966-78.

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September, 1979

III

Chronology of Main Groupings 1966-1976

1966 Melbourne University (T)REASON founded. Libertarian Society in existence(?) at Monash University.

1968 Melbourne Anarchist League formed, joins with (T)REASON.

1969 Monash University Tiddlywinks Club gives rise to off-campus group 'Solidarity'.

1970 Member from (T)REASON at La Trobe University joins preexisting individual anarchists to form La Trobe Anarchists. The La Trobe University Strawberry Club (radical publication group) formed independently but with increasingly close links to the Anarchists. Monash University Anarchists formed as on-campus projection of 'Solidarity'. Contacts between the three University groups and Solidarity. Several Melbourne Conferences 1970-72.

1971-3 Ex-Solidarity forms Free Store in Collingwood, becomes 'Working Peoples Association'. This then splits in 1973 into Self-Management Group and Anarcho-surrealist Insurrectionary Feminists. Melbourne University (T)REASON (called 'MU Anarchists' since 1970) effectively dead with active members in Self-Management Group. Strawberry members acquire printing press for anarchist literature.

1974 Disappearance of previous groups except La Trobe one. Anarchist Black Cross formed by individuals from Self-Management Group with some Spanish Anarchists. Strong group develops at La Trobe, works together with Anarchist Black Cross. Ecology Group at Monash converts itself to a new Monash University Anarchists. A Feminist Self-Management Group develops from the Women and Labour Conference. La Trobe Group commences publication of a national Anarchist Bulletin and answers Sydney's call for a National Conference. General Meeting of Melbourne Anarchists (called on the basis of the WPA address list of 1973 for an earlier national bulletin.) Beginning of two-monthly General Melbourne Meetings of the Victorian Regional Anarchist Federation. Strawberry Press acquired by two individuals with Free Store and Anarchist Black Cross backgrounds and becomes '/* Press', a movement press and meeting point.

1975 Federation of Australian Anarchists founded in Sydney Conference. All Melbourne Groups enter. Black Cross disbands.

1976 Formation of Libertarian Socialist newspaper group. Developing split amongst ex-La Trobe anarchists between members of Libertarian Socialist and associates of /* Press. Breakdown of Melbourne central meetings. Mid-year split in FAA leads to bulk of those attending central meetings joining the Libertarian Socialist Federation together with most La Trobe University Anarchists. Monash Anarchists remain with FAA. Most ex-La Trobe University/ex-Black Cross/ex-/* Press Anarchists remain outside both organisations. Brisbane SMG sends a member to start a new group - Libertarian Workers for a Self-Managed Society - on their programme.

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PART A: TOWARDS AN ANARCHIST ORGANISATION AND PROGRAMME

1. Towards Anarchist Organisation

There is not (and, as far as I know, never has been) a federation of Australian Anarchists. The name 'Federation of Australian Anarchists' was merely chosen some years back according to that principle whereby any group of anarchists at all calls itself a "federation" (presumably thereby intending to imply that the members - all three of them in some cases - remain free, independent and equal). In general it would be more accurate to speak of an 'aggregation' than a 'federation' when talking of Australian anarchism but that would not, perhaps, sound as nice.

If we are to have a genuine federation of Australian anarchists it is necessary to remember that such an organisation is a federation of groups - state, regional, functional or local - rather than an association of individuals. Furthermore a federation is a binding together for common external purposes of groups retaining internal autonomy. The idea of local autonomy is in the anarchist tradition - and corresponds to the realities of our current situation - but if anarchist groups have anarchism as both their internal aim and the purpose of their external relations it is hardly clear that common action is compatible with an extreme interpretation of internal autonomy.

The basis of the federative form is that pre-existing groups or organisations come to an agreement whereby each group undertakes to do certain things for the others - or for the federation if this takes on a reified form. To put it in a more formal mode of speech: the groups exchange mutual obligations and set up a framework for further contacts and the resolution of conflicts. (Measured by such an ideal it will be clear why I call Australian anarchism an 'aggregation'.) Federations in any genuine sense cannot be set up from above - "federation from above" being indistinguishable from central direction - and can only be extended by the existing federation after constituting themselves independently.

Despite my reservations concerning the ultimate compatibility of mechanically interpreted federalism with anarchist revolutionary action I would not wish to deny that a Federation of Australian Anarchists would be a great, indeed a giant, step forward. The federative form allows development of closer ties between local and regional groups as well as the development of special national organs when and if such are needed. The problem is that a federation is only as good as the bulk of its component groups. Thus the task confronting Australian anarchism is not that of national organisation but that of state, local and functional organisation.

It seems that one thing that is essential at the moment are state or regional groups with the functions of:

a) bringing existing anarchists into contact with each other,

b) arousing general interest in anarchism outside the movement and making new "converts,"

c) encouraging the formation of local or functional groups which will engage in agitational and propaganda work within factories, unions, schools, universities, local government, etc.

Ultimately the basis of an anarchist movement must be its local - functional or occupational groups, i.e. groups based on regular personal contact between members, but these will have to be created and in the interim groups of a much wider span of membership will have to serve. When a functioning network of action groups is created within such a framework the original organising group could be transformed into a propaganda section attached to a state or regional federation (if we have to use that word).

The ultimate cells of an anarchist federation are its affinity groups: groups based on a common locality, status or occupation or on a common interest in particular sorts of anarchist activities. Of these certain of the latter type are of special national importance. One needs groups of people who will take it upon themselves to publish magazines, newspapers, pamphlets or newsletters since these things are local in production however national their function. Similarly one needs groups that will maintain lists of speakers for propaganda work - and of course do propaganda themselves - as well as groups that engage in, or organise, research into topics of interest to the movement. It is the existence of such a network of specialisations that defines a federation as something more than the sum of its parts.

If the important thing is the real relations of co-operation between component groups - the exchange of finance, printed material, experiences and trained manpower - the exact organisational specifications of the Federation are obviously unimportant except insofar as they may help or hinder this co-operation. If we are to have a National Committee then it might as well just consist of state secretaries - when and if they come into existence - and the secretaries of any functional and/or occupational groupings that emerge, e.g. anarchist groups organised nationally in particular trade unions or professions. Similarly the state committees or committees in any specialised national organisations could consist of the secretaries of local groups and so on. (The assumption underlying this scheme is that the prime purpose of a permanent national organisation is to improve communication and allow decisions to be made in between national conferences. I do not think that many important decisions will have to be made in the near future and neither do I think that there need be or should be national policy-making between conferences - while anarchism remains legal of course - but it is important to have available channels of communication. I certainly do not intend however that all anarchist communication should flow through this network. Any anarchist group should be able to contact any other directly and any anarchist should be able to address all anarchists through the pages of the Bulletin.)

(FAAB., No. 1., Oct., 1974)

2. Reply: A Letter On Organization

I would like to make some comments about points raised in the article 'Anarchist Organization' in the previous Bulletin. In this article, the writer illustrates three types of anarchist organization which are perhaps now possible in Australia. These are:-

1. local interest groups;
2. regional or state bodies;
3. a national federation

Crucial to the existence of any anarchist organization is, of course, the local groups, and I believe that these should be based on common occupation, or perhaps locality, and not merely on a professed "interest in anarchism". The more a local group is divorced from everyday living, the more such a group becomes both in reality and appearance, a "separate organization". This belief leads me open to the criticism that I am opposed to anarchists organizing as anarchists. However I am concerned that anarchist groups should not take on even the appearance (if not the reality) of being like leftist vanguard parties.

There is of course a need for anarchists to meet, exchange ideas and perhaps engage in propaganda and produce magazines and this can be done (as suggested in the article) at the regional or state level. The organisation at this level should be based on individuals and its functions are well set out by the article. These regional or state conferences must be very careful of their propaganda role, as they are not based on any economic or social unit in society, except inasmuch as a meeting of individual anarchists is a social unit.

With respect to a national organisation, there are two concepts of what this could be:-

1. A federation of local Groups.
2. An extension of the regional groups.

I agree with the article that the essential task of any national group is to aid communications between groups and individuals within and without Australia, so that it could federate local groups and incorporate any other individuals whose only contact with the movement is through a regional group. Since the national body is not a policy making or directive body, there should be no conflict between 'activist' and 'armchair' anarchists. Anyway, most members of regional bodies would be active at the local level. Any national conferences which might be held would not be making decisions that would bind individuals or groups. However these conferences should always be fruitful in bringing anarchists together where they can exchange ideas. A national group should not take on an independent, activist role, unless perhaps it is restricted to an organisation of local federated bodies.

My concern in writing this article is that anarchists should not be primarily involved in anarchist organisations, but should organise into groups where there is a common interest, libertarians, e.g. libertarian rank and file groups within unions. By doing this, hopefully, anarchists will not be regarded as merely another leftist sect waiting for the day when they can set up a 'dictatorship of the proletariat'.

(FAAB, No. 2, Nov-Dec. 1974)

3. The Organizational Platform of the Federation of Australian Anarchists

Preamble:

Far from the Second World War having produced a stable system of great power blocs secure in their heartlands and held in frozen equilibrium by the threat of mutual nuclear annihilation, the three decades since the war have witnessed major convulsions in all the great powers, together with endless violence on the periphery of the world system.

In the East the last act of the Bolshevik Revolution is being played out the conversion of 'Soviet' Russia into a gigantic authoritarian welfare state with or without the restoration of private property. In the West the international currency and energy crises, the 'great inflation' and the current turn into recession clearly show the bankruptcy of the Keynesian liberal state and throughout the advanced countries the attempted synthesis of all classes and groups in the parliamentary reformist state is breaking down. If it is true that in almost all countries, labour has accepted the bourgeois state and become merely one sectional interest among others in the existing society, it is also true that it is in conflict with these other sectional interests and the field of conflict is widening.

A century after the foundation of the modern worker's movement, anarchism's main competitors stand condemned by history. Both party dictatorship and parliamentary reformism have had their chance and as the libertarian wing of the International Workingmen's Association predicted, they have both failed when measured against the aim common to both wings of the classical workers movement. Moreover with them also lies a large share of the responsibility for the twentieth century holocaust. If today various micro-factions of 'left' labourites and 'revolutionary' Leninists rehearse doctrines that were already out of date in 1920, it is because they have learnt nothing from the last fifty years, nothing from Berlin, Kronstady, Budapest and Prague nothing from Belsen and Workuta, nothing from Stalin and Hitler.

Anarchism suffered the fate of any doctrine ahead of its time. It made the proletarian revolution its central concept at a time when the bourgeois revolution had not yet happened for the bulk of mankind. It was only the beginning of this century that saw a steady world-wide growth of anarchist and syndicalist organisations; a rise against which all factions of the so-called 'socialist' International closed their ranks. The world historical significance of the Russian Revolution was that it split the revolutionary left and crippled the anarchist and syndicalist movements.

In terms of its effects the Third, or Communist, International was a profoundly counter-revolutionary organisation. It destroyed its revolutionary competitors - the anarchists and syndicalists - but it put nothing in their place. The Industrial Workers of the World in America, the Shop Stewards Movement in England, the Revolutionary Shop Stewards in Germany - all were destroyed, they have yet to rise again. Nor was this destruction purely organisational, by the time of the Nazi-Soviet pact, when Stalin gave Hitler several hundred foreign communist refugees for execution, the Gestapo and G.P.U. were gunning down anarchist militants all over Europe and America.

Whilst modern anarchism recognises its descent from the revolutionary libertarian wing of the first workers' International, and its kinship with those libertarian militants who survived the onslaught of Stalinism and fascism in the twenties and thirties and the general destruction of the Second World War, it arises principally from a critical reflection on the experience of the socialist bloc and on the irrelevance of labour, socialist and communist parties in the advanced West.
Of the proletarian revolutions this century - Russia 1905, 1917 Kronstadt 1921, Asturias 1934 Spain 1936 East Berlin 1953 Poznan 1953, Hungary 1956; France 1968 - all except one started independently of the socialist and communist parties, only three gained the support of such parties and the majority were suppressed by socialist and communist parties. Such treachery, covering as it does a whole historical epoch, cannot be blamed on the characteristics of this or that individual leader it is an essential characteristic of such parties.

For this reason the central task of the revolutionary movement is the creation of flexible democratic organisation united by a common programme strategy and analysis rather than by subordination to a common centre uncompromised by automatic support for external power-political interests, and having sections capable both of independent action and of unity on a joint action programme with other sections. It is as a first step to such an organisation that the following document adopted by January national conference of the Federation of Australian Anarchists is put forward.

(FAAB, No. 4, March-April, 1975)
(Rabelais, Vol. 9, No. 1)

ORGANISATIONAL PLATFORM

MEMBERSHIP

The Federation consists of those groups and individuals in Australia who:

(a) are opposed to both capitalism and state socialism
(b) accept the possibility and desirability of libertarian socialism, i.e. a co-operative and egalitarian social economy without the state,
(c) reject the view that the state - i.e. police, army, parliament and bureaucracy - is the decisive instrument for the achievement of a libertarian social order, and
(d) accept the necessity of co-operation, planning and organisation for the achievement of anarchist aims.

AIMS

(a) to struggle against statist, sexist, ageist and authoritarian conceptions in all spheres of social life,
(b) to prepare the theoretical, ideological-cultural, moral, and material-organisational prerequisites for effective and permanent popular self-government in future crises,
(c) to propagate the general idea of libertarian socialism,
(d) to initiate, assist and participate in practical struggles for partial objectives on the basis of their relationship to libertarian socialist aims and objectives,
(e) to foster the development of the world anarchist movement both through building a strong Australian section and through mutual aid and discussion with other national sections.

STRUCTURE

(1) Affinity Groups

The basic units of the organisation are cells or affinity groups composed of either;

(a) persons engaged in a common occupation, working in a common institution or having a common status, e.g., shop stewards groups, student and teacher groups, women's groups, etc.
(b) persons engaged in common specialised work for the movement or having common interests, e.g., publishing groups, research groups, prisoners aid groups, etc.
(c) persons living or working in a common locality.

(2) Regional Associations

The cells or affinity groups in a given geographical region should form a regional association for purposes of mutual aid and discussion and for organising general propaganda. In areas where there are not functionally differentiated groups, regional associations should be formed in order to bring anarchists and sympathisers together and in this and other ways facilitate the emergence of affinity groups.

(3) National Sub-Sections

Affinity groups may also unite nationally, or regionally on the basis of common occupation, interest, status or program, to form sub-sections of the federation.

(4) Corresponding Members

Each group - affinity, regional or national - should designate a member for correspondence with the rest of the movement. If the names and addresses of such corresponding members cannot be published openly they should still be held by the group producing the internal bulletin and also the corresponding member of each regional association or national sub-section within the federation should keep the names and addresses of the corresponding members of its component cells or affinity groups.

(5) Individual Members

Although it is desirable that members belong to an affinity group, (or several), they may be attached directly to either a regional association, a national sub-section or the federation itself in the absence of suitable local groups.

(6) Any individual member or component group can contact any component group of the Federation either directly or if necessary through the medium of the internal bulletin or system of corresponding members.

(7) Any individual member or component group may place articles or statements in the internal bulletin, or - in case of space limitations - have articles or statements distributed together with the internal bulletin.

(8) Any component group may call a conference of all federation members, of all anarchists in a particular region, or of all anarchists active in a particular type of affinity group, and have the conference advertised through the internal bulletin or invitations issued through the system of corresponding members.

(9) Any affinity group may hold meetings with other affinity groups, or between its delegate and the delegates of other affinity groups and have the invitations issued through the system of corresponding members.

CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

1. No decision can be made or statements issued in the name of the federation. All statements and decisions are made in the name of the conference of individuals or meeting of group delegates making them.

2. National and Regional anarchist conferences are open to all members and decisions have only the force of recommendations, being not binding on members or component groups.

3. Meetings between revocable delegates with a mandate from their affinity group may make decisions binding on the groups they represent on the specific matters for which they have a mandate.

(FAAB, No. 3, Jan-Feb 1975)
(Also in Rabelais, Vol. 9, No. 1.)

4. Idea On Organisation and Workers' Power

It has been apparent within the Australian Anarchist Movement that there has been a failure to recognise new political conceptions of organisations in the present day struggle. The thoughts expressed here are the results of our political development over a number of years, and a reaction to the impotence of the Anarchists in Australia.

These are firstly to prepare the theoretical, ideological, cultural, moral, material organisational prerequisites for effective and popular self-government as in the aims of the FAA point (b). We believe in the absolute necessity for Anarchists to be involved in the direct and on going reality of the daily class struggle. At present we feel that many Anarchists today have neglected the importance of this position. Why only in Australia is there a distinction between 'class' Anarchists and Anarchists? It has also led to the failure of Anarchism to be a popular revolutionary idea among the working class. The workers' struggles cannot just be seen within the traditional Trade Union framework but are taken on a higher level of confrontation with forces of repression; this is typified by the May events in France '68 and Italy since then and in Australia with the impact of the Green Bans, the Ford workers' struggles in '73 and the increase of 'unauthorized' strikes around non-economic demands. Obviously these events illustrate that class consciousness arises from within the working class and does not need to be injected from outside. Therefore revolutionary consciousness evolves through struggle - action. The new Socialist man and woman will not

be born after the smashing of capitalism creates the conditions for this transformation; they will be born during the struggle against capitalism. Our role as Anarchists should be to stimulate such struggles. For too long in Australia Anarchists have seen the revolution within the confines of the conference table, talking to themselves. We pose a solution to this problem as one of becoming active within already Rank and File groups and creating effective new ones. Becoming a group of militants stimulating the development of forms of consciousness, struggle and autonomous organisation. We should and must establish a relationship with working people in particular struggles on two closely related principles;

(a) the rejection of the delegation of power to bureaucratic 'workers' organisations, and proposing the alternative of autonomous grass-roots organisations directly controlled by workers,

(b) a political line which begins with the daily problems of the working class, inside and outside the work place, and to gradually situate these problems in a more general societal context.

We also feel that the criterion of organisation is its effectiveness. It must be functional in its relation to the political maturation of militants, to the growth of consciousness and autonomous organisation in struggle and to the concept of workers' power. It follows that we believe that the grass roots organisation must enable workers to develop and control their own struggle.

The Anarchist Movement is fragmented and shapeless. It acks purpose. We are not playing games. If we take our politics seriously we must be aware of the reality of the struggle. Our mentality must reflect this.

(Black Cross Intervention at V.R.A.
Meeting. Printed F.A.A.D. No. 4
March-April 1975)

5. What can Anarchists do?

One of the problems of a new anarchist organisation - and particularly one as ambitious as the FAA - is that the members who are coming in with no idea of what they can do in the way of anarchist action, find that the other people in the organisation don't have any idea either. As a result, disillusionment sets in and the organisation never gets off the ground.

If the FAA was purely a student or youth organisation it would not have a chance. Depressing debates on the subject of 'what can we do?' would last a few meetings and people would drift away or, what is more worrying, all thought would be left behind in the rush into meaningless action. That this has not happened is due to the presence of a sufficient number of older comrades with the resources of personality to initiate things by themselves and with sufficient experience of other organisations to know that they can be worse. The problem then is not that the meetings are incapable of deciding what to do but that many people have no idea of what they should be doing. Age, inexperience and separation from ordinary life are against them. For people who work all sorts of problems arise that can be the basis of anarchist agitation and this can quite often be done on a personal basis. Students are not in this position and so have no obvious basis for relating their anarchist ideas to their lives.

The ultimate solution to the problem of being a student anarchist is to get a job and start ordinary life. Of course if you get a 'good' job then you won't be agitating at work and so becoming or remaining an archist activist would mean getting involved in some other area of social action education, the womens' movement, social welfare, community politics etc. There is no other solution - except for writers and publishers than that of taking up a particular area of activity as an anarchist and working to form groups of like-minded individuals.

Of course this is a long range solution and won't make people any happier now. Perhaps though if people had lower expectations of what can be achieved immediately meetings would be more productive. The intention was that the meetings perform an integrating function within the movement. They cannot do this until these activities, trends and currents are synthesised.

There are some things that students can do - the production and distribution of propaganda is an obvious example. They can also help those who are already doing something. Beyond that they can use their privileged access to information to prepare themselves intellectually for anarchist activity and propaganda in later life. Student radicals generally do this very badly if their leaflets and verbal contributions to meetings are any guide.

There is a long way to go before we have an anarchist revolution in Australia and even if meetings reached clear decisions and initiated lots of activities those now frustrated may be equally disappointed by the lack of obvious results. To be an anarchist means combining hope for the future with a realistic assessment of the present and bridging the gap between the two by patient propaganda and activity basing itself on the problems of everyday life. Ultimately this is the only basis for a serious anarchist movement.

(VRAB No. 2, May-June, 1975)

6. Anarchism and the Realist Conception of Politics

Since this paper is on the realist conception of politics, I feel that I should say something in advance about its concentration on revolution and theories of revolutionary organisation. Australia is very far from a revolution and one might wonder whether those groups who talk endlessly about revolution are actually bringing us any closer to one.

Certainly much discussion of revolution is irrelevant in our current situation and it is probably dangerous as well in that numerous people could be turned off by it. Despite this, I believe that a coherent anarchist theory of revolution is necessary at the current stage of development of our movement for three major reasons. Firstly, the absence of such a theory in the past has led many of the more intelligent and active anarchists out of anarchism into either counter-cultural withdrawal or authoritarian left groups. Secondly, the presence of such a theory would provide a viewpoint from which to intellectually integrate anarchist activities and would thus help the movement's self-definition. Thirdly and most importantly a developed theory of revolution has implications for the practical activity of the movement in the current non revolutionary period. To these reasons one may add an additional consideration. a coherent anarchist theory of revolution leading to clear practical guidelines and informing anarchist activity in the current situation would be a powerful reason for groups and individuals now outside the anarchist movement associating with it.

To introduce the problems I wish to discuss it is useful to consider one of the most important events in the history of anarchism the changeover from the anarchism of Bakunin to the anarchism of Kropotkin and Malatesta. After the death of Bakunin and the collapse of the First International anarchism changed from an organisation of activists trying to influence the workers' movement from within to a movement based on autonomous groups separate from the workers and all other movements. Because these groups were separate from the workers' movement they could not themselves serve as the means of bringing about the revolution since within anarchism this was seen as the task of the workers themselves. Thus they could only try to persuade the workers or peasants to revolt at most they could try to detonate such revolts by independent armed actions. Thus the political practice of anarchism became restricted to propaganda whether by the word or by the deed.

To reduce the function of anarchist groups to propaganda necessitates the assumption that given sufficient propaganda and agitation there will be a spontaneous uprising of the whole working class, or even the whole people which will liquidate the state and class society and lead to the establishment of federations of free

communes without the anarchists having to undertake any organising role. On this assumption once the masses are prepared any event might set them off: the theory of anarchist terrorism or propaganda of the deed developed by Kropotkin and others in the 1880's explained that revolutions happened because of the exemplary actions of groups or individuals who by opening the assault on the existing order, forced everyone to recognise publicly what they knew privately, viz. that it was rotten and ripe for replacement. Kropotkin's error was to convert what may be a true description of the approach of revolutionary times with a recipe for bringing revolutions about. As a result anarchist communism was subject to violent oscillations between the peaceful production of preparatory propaganda and armed attempts at detonation. As it turned out, no amount of anarchist terrorism served to bring about a revolution if detonation was really the problem, revolution required detonators of a much higher order.

The interesting point about the theory that anarchists can restrict themselves to general propaganda is that it presupposes a pure revolution in which everyone decides to revolt for explicitly anarchist objectives at the same time. Only under these circumstances are strategy and tactics irrelevant; only under these circumstances will libertarian revolutionary organs appear without anarchists taking any part in organising them. The problem is that if Kropotkin was right in his article, The Spirit of Revolt, then the propagation of revolutionary theory (and particularly the theory of propaganda of the deed Kropotkin elaborates in that article) will lead to groups and sections within the working and other classes who are more conscious and advanced rising in revolt before the rest of society is ready to move with them. But the political theory of post-Bakuninist anarchism takes no real account of this eventuality and hence is internally incoherent. its only relevance is to a situation that does not and will not exist.

The conclusions above suggest the following definitions: A revolutionary situation is a situation in which the power and authority of the state and dominant classes is for one reason or another temporarily paralysed. This becomes a revolution only if the movements of various national, religious, political or economic groups during the temporary vacuum of power at the centre proves a balance of social forces incompatible with the re-establishment of the old power. The revolution becomes permanent when the continued development of these social forces (and here the radicalising effect of the revolution itself becomes important) proves incompatible with a new political equilibrium between them and the process of revolutinnary development must proceed to the transformation or elimination of some of the elements of the previous social & political structure.

The anarchist theory of revolution must base itself on the perception that revolutions have the above characteristics, that even within what appears to be a pure spontaneous popular upsurge there are different social forces at work whose further development and conflict will decide the fate of the revolution. In this case propaganda is not enough and particularly not that propaganda based on the illusion of the possibility of a pure spontaneous upsurge of itself establishing social freedom. Anarchism has to appear as a social force itself it must manoeuvre in the clash of social forces and political organisations. This means that anarchists must produce strategic and tactical lines for specific circumstances.

Anarchism thus faces three broad strategic problems; that of elaborating strategies leading to the collapse of central power, that of preventing its seizure or reconsolidation by other groups, that of establishing a libertarian post-revolutionary society. Of these the first problem only is common to anarchism and other revolutionary movements the specifically anarchist problem is that of producing an organisational form capable of dealing with the first two problems without precluding the solution of the third.

Any attempt to face these problems leads back through anarcho-syndicalism, i.e. the entry of anarchists into the organisations of the working class, to Bakunin. Bakunin was not the only anarchist to consider these problems - as is evidenced by the dual organisation of Spanish anatchism in the twenties and thirties and by the Arshinov platform rodely adopted by the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists in France - but it is his work that seems most fruitful. But whilst there are many

things that we might wish to reject in the statutes Bakunin wrote for his largely mythical organisation and in his letters to his associates, at least they have the merit of raising explicitly most of the elements of the problems raised above.

The elements of Bakunin's model of revolution are: 1) the entry of anarchist agitators into the organisations of workers and peasants, 2) the co-ordination of sporadic and isolated strikes and revolts into a general uprising, 3) the use of the natural influence of anarchist militants within the workers' and peasants organisations, 4) the creation of federations of workers' and peasants' organisations to replace the state. Since Bakunin has been more often criticised than understood, it might be pointed out that Bakunin's authoritarianism was not a matter of the relation of the organisation to the class but of the higher levels of the organisation to the lower ones. The Bakuninist organisation might have power and influence but because it was secret it could not have authority. Whilst the members of the organisation were bound to accept the authority of the central committee the workers and peasants were under no such constraint. The latter might be manipulated but they were not required to accept anyone's or any organisation's authority. On the point of manipulation also it might be pointed out that Bakunin was not consciously guilty of the moralism of trying to give the people what was good for them. His view was that the aim of libertarian socialism was the clarified content of popular strivings and that only on this basis was such a revolution possible. The organisation's propaganda and agitation were thus a means of focusing popular aspirations.

Having paid our historical respects to Bakunin we must also admit that his model is hardly adequate to today's problems. The modern state is incomparably more stable than the states Bakunin and his followers were concerned with' one can hardly think revolution in terms of the co ordination of strikes and peasant revolts today. It must be admitted also that Bakunin was much more concerned with the destructive than the constructive phase of revolution his followers sketched out the essentials of the syndicalist programme but this is hardly a complete picture of the future society. Finally, and most obviously Bakunin's organisational conceptions were still saturated with the Blanquism of the secret societies of the 1840's and the traditions of the Italian carbonari. Despite this, the essentials of the Bakuninist picture remain valid. anarchists must be active in progressive social movements and especially in working class organisations their unity must consist in a common strategic orientation their propaganda and activity must be such as to narrow the gap between their own theoretical consciousness and that of the people they work with. In this latter process it is not a question of the anarchist militant having the 'higher' consciousness, it is a matter of the anarchist militant having a certain understanding of the society he or she lives in, the forces at work in it and the possibilities for their transformation in a libertarian direction. This understanding will certainly have to change in the process of inter-action with other people as the militant comes to understand his/her life experiences and as both they and the militant - and hence the militant's immediate situation change in the process of interaction. However thisby itself would be insufficient' militants in different areas must communicate their different experiences to each other for mutual discussion and analysis and the relations of these experiences to one another must be explained in terms of an overall theory of the society the militants are seeking to transform. Only on the basis of such a theoretical unification of different experiences is it possible to develop a common strategic line applicable to a variety of situations. It is only by virtue of a common theoretical understanding that militants working in different areas can determine whether or not their joint efforts are likely to be productive of the common goal a free society.

Of the four departments of revolutionary thought - criticism, analysis, destruction and construction - anarchism has been strongest on the first and weakest on the second. Anarchist communism, which largely abstracted from problems of social analysis and political realisation, devoted most of its attention to the constructive aspect but even here it is its model of the community that is most important since its economic doctrines are frankly utopian. Anarcho-syndicalism and council communism formally solved the problems of revolution and reconstruction

by identifying a single unit - the trade union in the one case and the factory committee in the other - as the basic organ both of revolution and of post-revolutionary society but this does not yet adequately answer the questions raised above. One would have to say something as to the how, when and why of the general strike or seizure of the factories, one would also have to say something as to the principles whereby these organs would make their economic decisions. Classical anarchism does not have the answers for our problems today but, then, neither do its most obvious competitors, classical marxism and leninism. Despite this, one can hardly ignore them. Social analysis must still build upon the foundations laid by Marx Bakunin, Machajski and the ex trotskyist critics of the 'new class'. Revolutionary organisation still requires a confrontation with the views of Bakunin, Lenin and the Spanish anarchists. Nor can one find clearer and more popular propaganda and social criticism than the writings of Kropotkin, Malatesta, Berkman and Goldman.

The implementation of a realist approach requires more than merely intellectual assent. It requires clarity on whether anarchism is to be based on ordinary people working towards the goal of social freedom or on marginal groups - poets, pushers, dropouts, etc. - for whom anarchism is an ideological justification of their existing life-style. It requires a sober analysis of existing society to discover the best fields of activity for those - chiefly student and non-student youths - who have a choice and the willingness of the latter to take this into account together with their immediate interests and aptitudes. Finally it requires anarchists who are not intellectually lazy, who are willing to learn <u>with</u> others and who can join with others in a dialogue unobstructed by the barriers of sex age, class, race, 'seniority' or knowledge.

(VRAB, No. 3, July-Aug. 1975)

7. What is Anarchism?

Are Anarchists Socialists?

Anarchists stand for the social ownership and control of all natural resources and productive assets. They do not think that this means state ownership. Instead of industry being controlled by managers appointed from above by the state, anarchists want the democratic control of industry by factory committees on the level of a single firm and by associations of factory committees and workers' councils on the level of the economy as a whole. We want workers self-management rather than state management of the workforce.

Are Anarchists Individualists?

Anarchists want a society based on co-operation in the future and believe that the only way to get it is to co-operate now. Thus anarchists reject individualism in the ordinary sense of the word.

They also reject that special form of individualism appearing in fascist organisations in which the whole organisation just expresses the personality and will of a single individual the leader.

Anarchists believe that collectivism and individuality are not opposed but are mutually supporting. A successful collective enterprise depends on the development of the skills initiative and responsibility of the individuals taking part in it and an individual can only develop such abilities and attitudes in society with other individuals.

Anarchists wish to develop human individuality they do not wish to promote individualism.

Are Anarchists Terrorists?

Ninety years ago anarchists thought that the assassination of especially hated individuals - police chiefs, prison warders or big capitalists - or of the official representatives of especially hated systems - czars, kings and presidents would help spur the workers on to revolt. This did not happen even under the shocking conditions of last century and so early this century anarchists abandoned this view. Modern terrorism whether by government or anti-government forces, is completely different from the terrorism of last century. It is not directed against individuals but against whole classes of people because of their race, religion nationality or even their sex. Anarchists totally reject this sort of terrorism not only on tactical grounds but on moral and political grounds. We refuse to kill people just because of their age, nationality, race religion or sex. Furthermore modern anarchism also rejects the theories used to justify terrorism last century.

What do Anarchists Recommend We Do?

The anarchists admit that governments can make life easier or harder for the ordinary people but we do not think that changes of government through elections can replace a revolution. Hence anarchists think that work within the industrial wing of the labour movement is much more important than work within its political wing. Working within the industrial wing does not mean trying to take over unions and having anarchist trade union secretaries but having anarchist members and an active rank and file.

Of course, everyone wants to improve rank and file activity. The anarchists however want to promote cross union rank and file activity at the shop, plant and regional level because this is the way one will create the cultural traditions within which factory committees and workers councils will arise 'spontaneously' in a crisis.

Are Anarchists Utopian?

The sort of changes anarchists recommend are those that are possible NOW. There is nothing inherently utopian about workers running industry themselves it has happened before and it will happen again. In Australia we are far from such a situation in part because there has not yet been a crisis in Australia which has suggested such a solution. This does not mean that there will not be such crises in the future. The task of anarchist militants today is to prepare themselves and the rest of the working class for future crises. The anarchists look forward to more than a social-economic and political change. We wish to abolish all oppression of individuals in particular the social oppression of individuals on the basis of natural distinctions of age, race and sex. The abolition of all such oppression may be in the far distant future, we do not know. We believe that in an anarchist society in which there are no class divisions and no person is subjected to arbitrary authority of another, the causes that gave rise to such discrimination will tend to vanish. The attitudes themselves however, may linger on and so we must start a conscious battle against them NOW. This battle the fight against non economic social oppression - is not reducible to the first battle against the economic oppression of class society although in practice the two are linked. Neither should be neglected in favour of the other.

Are Anarchists 'Unscientific'?

Anarchists are more scientific than other socialist movements in that before there were any socialist states in the world, the anarchists had shown theoretically that state socialism, i.e. the concentration of all social property into the hands of a single social organ - the state and the control of the latter by a party bureaucracy, would lead to a new class division in society between the property-less workers and the exploiting bureaucracy which would have collective possession of the means of production. The anarchist theory has received striking verification from the sharp class struggles (some of which have taken the form of national liberation struggles, e.g. Czechoslavakia)which have erupted in the socialist world over the last 55 years.

The dividing line does not run between anarchism and 'scientific socialism' or marxism since many anarchists are marxists. The dividing line runs between those who interpret the dictatorship of the proletariat as a dictatorship of a party through a state apparatus separate from society and those who interpret the dictatorship of the proletariat as a dictatorship of a class through its class organisations, factory committees and workers councils.

Distributed May Day, Victoria
by La Trobe Anarchists.

(FAAB, No. 5, June 1975)

PART B. MARXISM AND ANARCHISM

1. Marxist Theory and Anarchist Politics

A number of comrades seem to have drawn incorrect practical conclusions from my article Karl Korsch a Marxist Friend of Anarchism' published in Red and Black last year. I should like therefore to examine the political consequences of marxist theory i.e. to consider whether an anarchist can be a marxist in theory.

The answer to my question depends on whether there is any logical connection between marxist theory and (so-called) 'marxist' politics. Are those right who, because they are impressed by the marxist theory of Korsch and other intelligent marxists, have therefore gravitated towards the CPA or other marxist political groups? It seems to me that they are not; that such a conclusion is due to a deficiency of theoretical understanding of both marxixm and anarchism.

Marxist theory contains certain concepts useful for the analysis of class societies and their history, a theory of the capitalist economy. and a rudimentary theory of the origin of ideas and their social functions. That at least is its content from a purely scientific viewpoint. This content however was developed for critical purposes. to oppose the idealist view that God or logical categories propelled history, to oppose the bourgeois theories of economics which neglected capitalism's internally-generated instabilities and attempted to justify the system and to criticise the idea that legal, moral, religion, economic, etc. ideas were eternal and pure products of 'mind'. The reason for undertaking such a criticism was to support the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat against bourgeois society. This is the political position involved in marxist theory. it is hardly specific to marxists.

If one asks 'But where do the marxist political programmes fit into this?' the answer must be that in a very real sense they do not. A marxist political programme may be drawn up in concepts taken from marxist theory but so may a reactionary or fascist programme. A programme may be based on predictions drawn from marxist theory but making predictions involves using assumptions of an empiri cal nature which can be matters of dispute independently of the theory. In fact the important marxist political programmes of last century were all programmes for the proletariat in a bourgeois revolution, i.e. in a revolution in which the aim was to establish a parliamentary republic. It is hardly surprising then that marxist political parties were developed. It is less clear that a marxist politi-cal programme for a proletarian revolution should use the organisational forms of the bourgeois revolution.

(Cf. Korsch's Ten theses on marxism today' in Arena No. 29)

The question of the seizure (as opposed to the destruction) of state power remains the chief issue between anarchists and 'political marxists'. It must be remembered that Marx's initial impulse was anarchist and his problem of 1843 was that of destroying the state. His solution to this problem - as formulated in late 1843/ early 1844 - was that the state could only be abolished if men organised their social power through direct co-operation rather than mediately through a political organisation of society. For various reasons the most important aspect of this directly social organisation was the abolition of private property and the replace ment of production organised mediately through the market by production organised directly by the associated producers. Thus socialism in the economic sense was essential to anarchism in the political sense. This is in complete agreement with anarchist theory since Bakunin.

By 'the state' in his early writings, Marx meant an organisation of society stand-ing outside and above society and claiming to represent and direct it. According to Marx this power of the state was in part illusory in that in modern society the state is subordinated in part to civil society, i.e. the market and economy, which is itself not a sphere of direct control by individuals but rather is the uncon scious and unintended result of individual actions which in turn determines such actions. Thus Marx rejected the claim that the state could rationally direct society.

(This a much more sophisticated position than the vulgar understanding of the thesis that the state is the executive committee of the bourgeoisie. The various individuals and fractions of the bourgeoisie are in competition and it is this competition which moves the state.)

In the German Ideology Marx sharpened this analysis by deriving the state from the division of labour and the existence of a general interest within a multitude of conflicting interests. Simply because this general interest differs from all individual interests in a system of division of labour (the starting point for sex, class and national divisions) no individuals will serve it directly. Hence the general interest must be imposed on individuals 'from the outside' as if it was just another one of the conflicting interests. This general interest of the community having taken an independent form as the state becomes itself a particular interest not identical with the real interests of individuals (because different from each of them) or with the real interest of the community (which is general not particular).

In the theory of revolution developed in the German Ideology and the earlier writings classes rise to power by representing their particular class interest as the general interest. By the definitions above success in this enterprise is the seizure of political power, i.e. of the state. In the earlier writings the suggestion was that a proletarian revolution would be different but in the German Ideology it is argued that the proletarian revolution must proceed in the same way. Simply because individuals seek their own particular interests in existing society, the general interest must be imposed on them, i.e. it will appear as an independent, alien interest. Hence until the reorganisation of society and the economy has established a felt identity of particular interest with the general interest a state is required.

The realism of Marx's discussion cannot be denied but the practical conclusions drawn from it can be. In the sense of 'state' Marx used a system of workers councils or a federation of anarchist communes is a 'state' for as long as decisions are made by the group which are different from what individuals would do by themselves. It is not even essential that such decisions be imposed by physical, economic or moral force. Even if members or member bodies simply accepted them because they had previously agreed to abide by the results of a certain process of conflict resolution (decision process) this would not change the fact that there was underlying the agreement a conflict of interests. Marx's conception by no means requires the leninist or stalinist state and although the need for a party which coerced the class it claimed to represent could be derived by a similar argument Marx did not do this. Instead in the Communist Manifesto he merely makes the communists the most advanced part of the class and far from the communists being a party standing opposed to the class itself they are not even to be a party opposed to other working class parties.

In summary then marxist-leninist politics do not follow from marxist theory. Nothing in marxist theory implies the necessity of a state of the bourgeois or 'communist type in the transition period (and it is no part of anarchism to deny a transition period: some anarchists have said that strictly speaking we never reach a final state.) Those who join the Communist Party on the grounds that they find marxist theory impressive are in error. The only grounds for joining are that one thinks a programme at present committed to the support of the ALP government more feasible and more desirable as a revolutionary programme than the anarchist programme of organising self-management bodies at all levels of society to fight and then replace the bourgeois state.

(Unfortunately at present this theoretical conclusion seems to need amplification. Whilst criticising those who have withdrawn from anarchist activity to join quasi-leninist organisations I am by no means suggesting that they should be treated as enemies. The correct practical conclusion is not that anarchists - copying the maoists and other national socialist groups - should beat them up but rather that the level of anarchist theoretical culture be raised so that such erroneous conclusions are not drawn in future and those who consider theoretical issues are not driven from the movement).

(FAAB, No. 1, Oct. 1974)

2. Notes on Marxism and Anarchism

1. In attempting some sort of convergence or synthesis of anarchism and marxism it is not particularly relevant to discuss the respective personalities actions and motivations of Marx and Bakunin. That Marx had a strong libertarian streak and Bakunin a strong authoritarian one is irrelevant to the political and theoretical questions involved. (Indeed at this level of discussion it can be - and has been - argued that Lenin was the required synthesis of Marx and Bakunin.)

2. Nor is it enough to argue that marxism (Marx) and anarchism (Bakunin) had the same aim. It is a familiar (usually communist) platitude that anarchists and marxists agree about the end but disagree about the means - the anarchists charging that statist methods will never lead to freedom and the marxists charging that lack of methods won't either -- but anarchists should be very wary of accepting this formulation of the difference. In fact the mainstream anarchist tradition seems to reject the eschatological marxian distinction between human pre-history and the purely human history after communism is achieved in favour of a doctrine of continual social evolution. Anarchism was always intended as a doctrine about the next phase of social evolution and not as one about the 'end'- a rather unanarchist concept - to which this phase would lead.

3. There seem to be three strategies for a marxist anarchism (or anarchist marxism) which, happily for us, can be pursued together for at least some distance. These are those of a) separating Marx s historical and economic theories from Marxism's political practice b) re-interpreting key concepts of both marxism and anarchism so as to efface the apparent differences and, c) questioning whether marxist and anarchist politics have the same object, i.e. are about the same thing.

4. The first strategy amounts to questioning the link between Marx's theory of history ('historical materialism') and his practice of politics ('scientific communism'). Despite the deep and probably insurmountable problems involved here orthodox marxism has always held to the idea that there is some strong and direct link. Even in the most sophisticated theorists of the Socialist International the link was only weakened to the idea that given certain political aims - supplied from outside - the theory provided the necessary steps or conditions for attaining them. (Hence the platitude mentioned above if we all have common aims then anarchists will cease to be anarchists once they understand marxist science.)

For reasons which need not be gone into here the orthodox marxist theory of (orthodox) marxism is internally incoherent so we should not bother about trying to prove that anarchist politics rather than marxist politics is the more reasonable deduction from marxist theory. Instead it is better to join the general assault on orthodox marxism and fight the illusion that there could be any such deductive link between social theory and politics (i.e. attack the idea that politics is a causal science).

A preliminary step in this direction was made in the paper Problems of Marxist Science delivered at the Adelaide Marxist Scholars Conference last year.
(See Arena, 37)

5. The central disagreement between marxists and anarchists has been over the existence of the state in the transitional post-capitalist society and hence over the necessity of capturing the state. Anarchists have always been for smashing the state rather than capturing it but this is precisely where it seems hardest to differentiate Marx (in most of his moods) from the anarchists. The anarchists have not denied the necessity for organised workers' power in the period immediately after the revolution but they have denied the necessity for retaining and using the existing state apparatus (however transformed by charge of personnel at the top). Marxists - if they have ever succeeded in understanding this · have put it down to the confusion of the anarchists about political power but the confusion, if any, should rather be laid at Marx's door.

Marx worked with two rather different concepts of the state. one in which the state was merely the highest stage of political alienation (the appearance of the general interest in the form of a particular interest - with the accompanying possibility of representing particular interests as the general interest) and another in which the state was an apparatus both separate from and parasitic upon society. These two concepts appear together in the early writings but it is the latter concept which becomes more important in Marx's later writings on French politics. The paradox is that whereas Marx worked out his theory of the necessity of the state in the transitional period in terms of the former concept it was the latter anarchistic concept of the state that passed into marxism. Thus the argument for the necessity of a state in the transitional period has tended to become an argument for a separate power standing above society in the transitional period and this is in flat contradiction to certain other statements by Marx. On the question of the transitional state marxist political theory has oscillated between banality and self-contradiction; this is one point at which a critical anarchist analysis of Marx's views would be of real service to theoretical marxism. (Just as there are two senses of 'state' in Marx so also there are two senses of 'political'. In the wider sense a political movement is any movement that attempts to impose its aims on society in the narrower sense a political movement is one that aims at capturing the state. The definition whereby any independent movement of a class in pursuit of its own aims is a political movement refers to the wider sense of 'political' but this has not prevented marxists from using it to argue that therefore syndicalist movements should engage in electoral politics.

Again this non sequiter comes from the collapsing of the two concepts of the state into one. The fact that Spanish anarcho-syndicalism was in a certain sense a political movement hardly shows that it should have stood candidates in elections). An initial discussion of these questions was attempted in the article Marxist Theory and Anarchist Politics in a previous Bulletin but it needs further work, in particular an anarchist critique of recent marxist writings on the state, and an anarchist (and marxist) critique of Lenin's State and Revolution.

6. The third strategy starts from the marxist distinction between the bourgeois and the proletarian revolutions. It is a fact of history that nearly all marxist political programmes have been programmes for the proletariat in a bourgeois revolution i.e. marxist politics has had the bourgeois revolution as its object. As a result (C.f. Karl Korsch Ten Theses on Marxism Today, Arena 29) marxism has tended to reduce the proletarian revolution to the forms of the bourgeois revolution. Anarchism on the other hand has always had the proletarian revolution (i.e. the social as opposed to the political revolution - to use the terminology common to anarchism and the young Marx) as its object. An analysis along these lines would then attempt to show where the concepts of the bourgeois revolution have contaminated the rather sketchy marxist political theory of the proletarian revolution.

7. Despite the obvious value to anarchists of acquiring an understanding of marxism (and critical-scientific marxism at that: philosophical marxism can't be transformed in the way we require) the main point of a concentration on the question of the compatibility of marxist theory and anarchist politics is that of political struggle with non-anarchist marxist groups. All the strategies above are ways of undermining the theoretical basis of such groups in order to win their members and the people they might influence for an anarchist revolutionary position. Since at present we are very definitely the underdogs in such a struggle, there is no value in simply opposing anarchist politics to marxist politics. Instead we should try to subvert the marxist position by turning marxism against itself (hence joining the critical assault on orthodox marxism). Furthermore such subversion will demand a measure of 'terrorism': we must be prepared to take on and defeat the leading representatives of the opposition. To put it bluntly: we must be prepared to be authoritarian when dealing with our enemies (and do the homework required to this successfully).

8. A final - and unrelated - point: at the recent conference someone put forward the view that since Marx was an authoritarian, his theory is authoritarian and hence of no interest to anarchists. Rather than simply noting the theoretical

nullity of this 'argument' we should consider its ideological function. Presumably the person putting it forward would accept the converse reasoning. that because anarchism is an anti-authoritarian theory anarchists are non-authoritarian personalities. It is no accident that this self-congratulatory position has been associated with some of the most sexist, internally elitist and informally hierarchical anarchist groups.

P.S. Comrades who want to follow up these questions will have to be fairly careful about where they learn their marxism from. My own preferences are for Lichtheim's Marxism for the general and historical account (although he is incapable of understanding anarchism and is dubious on marxian economics) and for Korsch's Karl Marx for a good discussion of Marx's mature theory. After that one can study the process of the emergence of marxism in Marx's early writings - most books on the subject are boring or wrong -and then go into the current controversies about marxian economics, epistemology, etc. Eventually one has to deal with the Althusser school but with the above preparation -and one should read Colletti's Marxism and Hegel and From Rousseau to Lenin before starting on Althusser- one can probably extract the rational kernel from Althusser without embracing the whole mystical (and Stalinist) shell.

(FAAB, No. 3, Jan/Feb. 1975)

3. A Letter on Marxism and Anarchism

(The following letter was written in 1975 in reply to a young Queensland worker who had written asking for a representative of the FAA to engage him in debate on 'Marxist philosophy and anarchist philosophy'. (Later on the enquirer abandoned 'dialectical materialism' for national socialism on philosophical grounds but the correspondence was not continued by the FAA member). The tone of the opening paragraphs below (a certain condescension) was not due to the intellectual quality of the enquiry but was due to the enquirer's having spoken of the necessity of liquidating anarchists after the revolution).

Dear Leonard,

Since I am the only FAA member who has done anything much on the relations between marxism and anarchism - and since no one else is particularly interested in the topic - I have taken it upon myself to reply to your letter.

This creates some difficulties: for a start I have no interest in political philosophy and I have no desire to make anarchism into one, secondly, I have no desire to support the sort of anarchism that you are attacking; thirdly, I don't agree with your presentation of marxism. As a result I won't really be arguing on your terms which assume uncritically (or 'undialectically' - if you like) that there are two things - anarchism and marxism - that are to be compared. As you are no doubt aware there are many 'marxisms' and I don't just mean Marx's, Engel's, Lenin's, Trotsky's, Stalin's, Mao's, Castro's, etc. Rather I mean. structuralist/ non-structuralist, historicist/non-historicist, humanist/ non-humanist, positivist/ 'philosophical', 'western'/'second-international', hegelian/kantian/phenomenological/ existentialist, etc. The list can be extended considerably even if one does not use such 'loaded' terms as 'orthodox' 'dialectical materialist' or 'critical'.

Not only can one choose between, say, Lenin, Lukacs, Korsch, Althusser, Colletti, etc. -- one has to decide which particular period of theirs one wishes to identify with. The situation is not quite as bad as this in anarchism but even so one can hardly lump together Bakunin and Kropotkin in the sort of discussion you are trying to undertake, let alone synthesise them with syndicalism and Arshinov's 'Platform of the Libertarian Communists'. It is precisely on the questions of revolutionary organisation, post-revolutionary power, transitional societies and final aims that the significant differences between anarchisms occur. Because of these difficulties I shall restrict myself to the relations between what I understand as the rational kernel of neo-bakuninist anarchism and Marx's political ideas (except when explicitly criticising your presentation of the problem).

1. It does not seem correct to say that marxism and anarchism have the same goal. It might seem that marxism and Kropotkin's anarchist communism have the same goal, i.e. 'stateless communism', but this is to confound a society without political institutions, i.e. Marx's, with a society formed out of such institutions, i,e. Kropotkin's. Marx talked in terms of the gradual depoliticisation of a centralised administration (in some of his moods at least) whereas Kropotkin was talking of federal organisations of communes, i.e. of bodies having economic, social and political functions. Thus Marx sees the end of the state as also an end of politics; in a certain commonsense use of the term anarchists didn't. This has immediate implications for the timescale of their respective utopias. Marx's is the more far off.

If one leaves anarchist communism and talks about Bakunin the differences become even more pronounced. Bakunin was after all a collectivist, not a communist. His aim was to establish equality, i.e. to liberate the workers through the suppression of all socio-economic-political divisions. The abolition of the state - its replacement by federations of worker-managed enterprises and peasant co-operatives - was one of the means to this end. Bakunin certainly did not think that human equality would be achieved overnight - in fact he thought that it might be several centuries before even Europe and North America would form a single socio-political unit of people of approximately equal circumstances - and he did not speculate about the direction of further social change. He did not think communism compatible with statelessness (in his time or in the immediate future) and he had independent arguments that the state, when used to introduce either socialism or communism, led to new social divisions and inequalities (to 'new classes' if you like) and hence militated against the liberation of the working class.

To see how completely different the aims of historical anarchism and marxism are, it is only necessary to formulate the questions the two doctrines originally asked. Bakunin's question was: what are the conditions of the liberation of the working class (or working peoples in less advanced countries)? The answer was: that liquidation of state (and the expropriation of the capitalists, abolition of inheritance, prohibition of the hiring of labour for production for exchange, universal integral education, etc.) Marx's question was: what are the conditions of universal human emancipation, i.e. the transcendence of the modern state? The answer to this was communism, i.e. the abolition of private property and exchange.

The social force that will accomplish this was identified as the proletariat which in liberating itself liberates humanity. (The question appears in the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, it is more exactly formulated and answered in The Jewish Question and the final step is made in Towards the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction, all apparently in 1843).

Put this way it becomes obvious that the abolition of the state is the goal for Marx whereas for anarchism it is merely instrumental; conversely the liberation of the working class is the goal for anarchism whereas for Marx it is merely instrumental. This difference is reflected in their writings: the anarchists certainly criticised the state but their criticism was intended to rouse the masses against it, at most one could say that they regarded government or authority as an evil. Marx's criticism was much more radical (of the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right and the Jewish Question) in that he criticised the state as a mode of alienated life quite independently of its class content and in particular he criticised the 'non-despotic' state. His criticism goes far beyond the more 'empirical' complaints of the anarchists. The anarchist argument remains at the level of the social and economic effects of state authority or attacks authority as such: Marx attacks the state as such.

There is another point that arises here. If one takes the lower stage of communism (what you and the marxists tend to call 'socialism' and what Marx in 1844 called 'communism' - as opposed to socialism which was the higher stage) as expounded in the Critique of the Gotha Programme then you will find that - especially as concerns the wage system - Bakuninist collectivism is the same thing except that the state is replaced by somewhat different institutions, i.e. by (Paris) communes.

2. If marxism and anarchism have different goals, then it is no longer obvious that a difference in methods implies that someone is making a mistake. In fact, of course anarchists hold that marxists are mistaken in their own terms in that they have insufficiently developed their theory of the state. The anarchist argument was that the marxists ignored the role of the state in the creation of social differentiations. Neo-marxist, trotskyist and maoist worries about 'new classes', ruling castes and degeneration are belated recognitions of the existence of the phenomena that Bakunin (and Machajski) predicted.

3. The interrrelationships between anarchism(s) and Marxism(s) can only be discussed within a framework which distinguishes goals, general historical-social-economic theories, particular analyses of societies at given periods and political strategies for the different policital movements. In actual movements these things are rarely fully distinguished or articulated but for purposes of comparison, one needs rational reconstructions. Given such a reconstruction one can identify the missing components and discuss the logic of the movement's praxi . From this perspective the only reasonablyadequate analyses are those involved in the disputes in Russian social-democracy between the 1890's and 1906 and Marx's discussions of Germany 1843-50. (Of course most of these were wrong but at least they attempted to elaborate all the elements). Since Bakunin's writings anticipate many of the elements of bolshevism and are principally about eastern and southern Europe, he should probably also be mentioned in this connection. (The usual failure of both marxists and anarchists is that of passing from the level of general theory to political strategies without elaborating a specific analysis of the given social formation).

For both marxism and bakuninist anarchism the highest level general theory is the general theory of historical materialism. The general theories of the state however differ since marxism has usually elaborated its state theory (but not always its analysis of particular states - at least as concerns the underdeveloped world) at the level of abstraction of a single society whereas anarchism has elaborated its at the level of the 'community of nations'. Both theories are developments of historical materialism but certain points are missed if one keeps to the single society model of the 1859 Preface.

Marx and Bakunin are in agreement on the general point that the state as the illusory form of the general interest must necessarily express an interest which is in fact particular but this theory developed by Marx in the 1843-46 period is not the same thing as the vulgar marxist idea of the state as an instrument in the hands of a particular class. In 1843 Marx after all had derived the existence of the modern state, i.e. the state as something separate from society - from the existence of civil society not from the existence of classes. The state's function is to maintain the existence of the given society and hence to maintain the position of the existing dominant groups. The vulgar marxist thesis had disastrous results in 1914 - suddenly almost every socialist discoverd that his state expressed national and not merely class interests. That is to say they had never realised that the point of the state is to transform a particular class interest into a national form and national interests into a particular class form. (The contrast is telling - only a small minority of anarchists were pro-war).

There are of course certain difficulties of fitting the state theory Marx derived from the political sociology of revolution into historical materialism since the former preceded the latter by some three or four years but there is no doubt that Marx continued to adhere to his earlier analysis as a comparison of the discussion of the counter- revolution in France 1848-50 with the earlier writings show.

4. The argument that the proletariat needs to seize state power is given in the German Ideology. There are a number of points of interest that follow from it.

(a) For vulgar marxists this always seemed to mean seizing the existing state - despite the clear theses in The Civil War in France on the necessity of smashing it - or at most to mean constructing another similar structure (of the bolsheviks).

(b) Marx's argument is not about post-revolutionary organisation but about the mechanism of revolution. For a revolution to occur the proletariat must represent its class interest as the national interest and hence rally other elements to its side. This means giving the class interest political form in the sense that it represents itself as national. An additional element in the argument is of course that the proletariat interest is a (or the)human interest and hence is not really just a narrow class interest (there is hence already a dying away of the state in the sense that true communal interest and ruling class interest are coming together). It is only on this basis that a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' is a 'dictatorship' in the classical sense that Marx intended. (At the risk of labouring the obvious: a dictatorship is a grant of absolute power made by society to an individual to rule in their interests for the duration of a national emergency. Rule in one's own interest is tyranny not dictatorship. The distinction was perfectly familiar to the French revolutionaries and their successors such as Blanqui from whom Marx adopted the term).

(c) Nothing follows from Marx's discussion as to the particular institutions through which the proletariat's interest will be expressed as the ruling interests. Thus nothing follows as to whether the proletariat will use a state of the orthodox type - a possibility Marx denied after the Paris commune - or whether it will use different political institutions.

5. Because of the last point anarchism is completely compatible with this particular part of Marx's theory of politics. Communes are political institutions as are federations of communes. Anyone who doubts that Bakuninism or syndicalism means the dictatorship of the proletariat should reread the earlier part of Homage to Catalonia.

I think the above and the papers I enclose (these are reproduced in the current volume also) say enough on the subject of the marxism/anarchism debate. You raise a number of other points about existing proletarian consciousness, participation in reformist activities, etc. which are hardly the point at issue and so I won't comment further on them (or on your 'derivation' of the need to eliminate anarchists). However, since you ask about 'dialectical materialism' I will make some comments on that.

(The letter then proceeded with a comprehensive 'western marxist' critique of 'dialectical materialism').

4. Marxism and Anarchism Notes for a Debate

To discuss the relationships between marxism and anarchism we need to make certain distinctions and carefully define the relevant senses of 'marxism' and 'anarchism'.

1. We cannot immediately define anarchism as a movement or doctrine aiming at the overthrow of the state because a) consistent individualism aims at the dissolution of state as well and b) so too does marxism.

2. Since anarchism aims at the suppression of private property and a co-operative socialised economy it can easily be distinguished from all varieties of individualism it is rather more difficult to separate anarchism and marxism. As a socialist doctrine aiming at the death of the state marxism would appear to be merely one form of anarchism.

3. However Marxism is not merely one form of anarchism, it is a very special form: the most utopian yet developed. Its utopianism lies in the idea that the death of the state is also the end of politics. In mainstream anarchism on the other hand the suppression of the state is its replacement by alternative political institutions, self-governing communes and federations of communes.

4. The peculiarites of Marx's anarchism (a doctrine somewhat different from later marxism) arise from his running together his early socio political critiques of the (Hegelian) theory of the modern state and the character and results of the

bourgeois revolution with the socio-economic analysis deriving from the materialist theory of history that he developed later. Whilst the complete picture is rather complex the main points are that.

a) Marx's aim is the destruction of the modern representative state,
b) this modern state is identified as the expression of a separation between political and economic life,
c) this separation is based on private ownership,
d) Marx identifies a fully human society with both statelessness and communist distribuiton according to needs,
e) Marx interposes between existing society and the future fully human society, a period of indefinite extent characterised by political democracy, state ownership and socialist distribution according to work,
f) thus the separatic.. between political and economic life is only transcended in full communism.

5. In terms of the distinctions between socialist and communist distribution, political and non-political institutions and state and non-state societies, we can characterise Bakunin's anarchism as stateless (but political) socialism - as opposed to Marx's state (political) socialism - and Kropotkin's anarchism as stateless (but political) communism - as opposed to Marx's statelss (non-political) communism. If we take the post-Paris Commune distinction between the bourgeois state and the proletarian commune-state, then it is most accurate to characterise the two non-Marxian anarchisms as commune state socialism and commune-state communism, respectively. It is important to note that in each non-Marxian conception the separation between political and economic life is overcome if the economy is controlled democratically from below by factory committees and workers councils rather than being controlled by officials appointed from above by however democratically elected an assembly. This is the crucial difference between Bakunin's commune-state socialism and Marx's state socialism even in the post-Paris commune phase. In the anarchist conception, the organisation of the workers at the point of production can overcome the separation between political and economic life without individuals having to evolve to the stage of no longer needing political institutions at all. (Except in the compound 'commune-state' I amhere using 'state' to refer to a political apparatus separate from social life, an army, bureaucracy and police force standing over society, whether controlled by a despot or a democratically elected parliament. By a political institution I mean any institution which exists to discover, represent or impose a general social interest distinct from the spontaneously felt interests of each individual, e.g. any decision-making assembly).

6. If we take the difference between marxism and other anarchisms at its most extreme, viz. that between Marx's stateless (non-political) communism and Bakunin's statless (political) socialism, then the difference becomes that for Marx socialism is the means to anarchism whereas for Bakunin anarchism is the means to socialism. For Marx the liberation of the working class overthrows private property thus destroying the antagonistic unity of the civil society and the modern state: for Bakunin the destruction of the state is the means to the 'expropriation of the expropriators' and the liberation of the working class. It is simply wrong to say that marxism and anarchism have the same aim they can have very different aims (although less so in the case of Marx and Kropotkin).

7. We must now take account of the difference between marxism as a political doctrine and marxism as the scientific basis underlying this political doctrine, in particular the materialist conception of history and Marx's political sociology of revolution. As a political doctrine marxism stands opposed to other anarchisms, as a scientific doctrine it need not. The marxist political doctrine depends on more than the scientific doctrine, it depends also on additional hypotheses drawn from C19th west European experience and, most importantly, on the particular aim marxist politics sets itself the establishment of a stateless and politics-less communist society. An anarchism such as Bakunin's which sets itself a quite different aim - the establishment of political and economic equality through the abolition of the state and private property - can accept exactly the same scientific doctrines and yet produce quite different political strategies. To achieve clarity on this question, we must distinguish three determinants of a political strategy: the goal it is intended to promote: the general theories it is based on: the analysis in terms of

the particular social formation in which the strategy is to be implemented. A difference in any one of these may lead to a difference in the strategy.

8. Whilst the materialist conception of history and Marx's political sociology of revolution are equally acceptable to marxism and anarchism, there are genuine differences in the details of the two state theories:

a) marxists have usually rather incautiously rejected the anarchist idea that state power can create social divisions ('new classes' - if you like),

b) marxists have usually taken the argument that class struggles take a political form and that revolution is a political act to mean that the struggle is over possession of the existing state apparatus (or over the replacement of it by a new state apparatus with different personnel).

Neither of these marxist positions follows from Marx's analysis. The first position arises from a concentration on the single society model of base and superstructure and from general ignorance of both the development of capitalism and of east European history. The second position is one that Marx himself held until the Paris Commune and then rejected the reason that he could consistently reject it is that nothing concrete as to the organisation of working class power follows from Marx's arguments about the sociology and politics of revolution.

9. The arguments above imply that there are marxist anarchisms quite distinct from Marx's anarchism. Anarchist politics can be derived from a marxist theoretical basis provided that marxist state theory is extended by the anarchist arguments.

(Read at Monash University, 10/9/75)

PART C: THE THEORY OF A SELF-MANAGED SOCIETY

1. Anarchism, Authority and the Problem of Law

In contrast to Marxism and other revolutionary doctrines of the past, anarchism has seen the struggle for freedom in the main as a struggle against authority. In stressing the state as the main enemy anarchists have not generally been ignoring the class basis of power but rather have been illustrating the important insight that the power of the state rests on its authority as much as on physical force and indeed in the modern age the forces it commands themselves rest on its authority. However, by thus declaring war on authority i.e. legitimated power, as a disguise for naked power and by denouncing authority as the enemy of freedom, anarchism has largely prevented itself from developing either authoritative organs of revolution or counter-structures to those of official society. Whilst cheap jokes about the illegitimacy of anarchists forming organisations are historically and theoretically baseless, the fact remains that anarchist organisations have rarely risen above the level of propoganda except when they have been primarily something other than 'political organisations, e.g. trade unions or armies. Bakunin certainly planned and dreamt of an organisation going far beyond anything the anarchist movement later produced or attempted but his more than proto-bolshevik organisational conceptions were authoritarian rather than anarchist.

The failure of anarchism to produce authoritative revolutionary organisations cannot be mechanically traced to anarchist theory for this contained at least the elements for a solution of the organisational problem. The failure to elaborate these elements is in part the reason for the confusion of anarchism with extreme liberalism or individualism. Although like liberalism, anarchism saw freedom fundamentally as freedom from the oppression of states, churches, etc. and considered the state of freedom to be a natural one, anarchists did not jump to the individualist conclusion that this natural state was the liberal 'state of nature' or that freedom was fundamentally freedom of the individual from everything outside of him. Whether in terms of Bakunin's rejection of the existence of man as such outside of society, or in terms of Kropotkin's theory of mutual aid which postulates sociability as more fundamental than individualism, the anarchists made 'freedom' a social concept. One could be free in society, there could be a free society, but one could not be free outside of society, freedom from society was a contradiction in terms. That Kropotkin in elaborating his theory did not stop at mutuality in the animal kingdom but went on to consider 'free' medieval towns implies that for anarchism freedom is not just a property of individuals but may belong to a group of associated men and women. Anarchist organisation is not a contradiction in terms.

The failure of anarchist organisations derived rather from a defective theory of authority. The problem of an authoritative revolutionary organisation is at base idential with that of revolutionary discipline. Unlike official society which can discipline offenders physically revolutionary organisations can usually only discipline offenders morally ultimately by exclusion from the organisation. Here we must distinguish two absolutely different cases: when a trade union member is 'sent to coventry', or an Athenian ostracised, he is expelled from the society of his <u>fellows</u> when a communist is expelled or suspended from the party, the intention is not the same, it is to withdraw the <u>privilege</u> of participating in the revolution. The aim of trade unions is to increase the bonds of loyalty <u>between</u> the members; on the contrary in all genuine bolshevik style organisations (and fascist ones too) the intention has been to separate the members from one another and bind them individually to the party or leader. Thus the party is like a state in miniature whereas the union is rather more like a society. The difference is not in the organisation forms adopted, whether democratic federalist, centralist or whatever, but in the type of authority claimed by these structures. Authority in the union is derived from the agreement of the members themselves whereas authority in the party derives from the central committee, a sacred text, or the absolute of revolution itself, and hence lies outside of every member. The paradox has been that the 'anti-authoritarian' anarchists have nearly everywhere accepted the authority of trade unions as a matter of course but have tended to base their own organisations around the opposite concept of authority. In doing this the problem of a disciplining authority has been avoided by treating the problem in terms of self discipline or 'voluntary and thoughtful cooperation towards a common goal'. (Bakunin).

Such self-discipline is of course necessary but by establishing the anarchist ideal as the ultimate source of authority, rather than by grounding authority in the association of members, considerations of ideological purity potentially overshadowed considerations of common action. As a result anarchism failed to achieve mass organisations until it intersected with the syndicalist tradition. Even then the proletarian anarcho syndicalist organisations followed the union conception of authority at local and industry levels but reverted to the anarchist pattern at higher levels. Thus the 'infinity of local anarchist insurrections' in Spain remained precisely that each section owing its loyalty to anarchism acted independently for anarchism (although here it must be admitted that these were not really syndicalist bodies). The cycle of revolt and repression spread revolutionary consciousness and meant that although sections were destroyed the entire anarchist movement was never risked, but local insurrections never seriously challenged central power and so although the Spanish revolution in 1936 was the most advanced yet seen the signal for general revolt was given to the anarchist workers by fascist generals.

Modern anarchism has drawn from revolutionary history the conclusion that the form of both the revolution and post-revolutionary society should be the workers' council, generalised nationally as the union and locally as the commune. Councils have generally been considered as a solution of the organisation problem in a narrow sense. So they are, or at least the basis for a solution, but they are even more obviously the solution of the problem of authority. The council's authority arises from the agreement of its members, it asks of them what they have promised to give. The authority of the union, commune or federation of communes or unions likewise arises from the agreement of their members. A clear perception of this is necessary if one is to factor out technical organisational problems from political problems. While it is believed that authority is always a relation of higher and lower no free organisation is possible, only if authority arises not from the surrender of power but as a network of freely given promises and freely accepted obligations can a free society exist.

Just as anarchism has seen authority as legitimated power so also it has seen law as a disguised form of violence. Indeed on this point anarchism has been outstripped by vulgar Marxism for which the content of existing law, and of law at anytime, is just the will of the ruling class. The difference is that for vulgar Marxism the form of law, law as such, is neutral and only its content is good or bad whereas anarchism rejects law as such. However, anarchism also protests the contents of existing law and like vulgar Marxism must see law as something imposed by identifiable agents: the ruling class. This is the central problem with both accounts law is seen as a matter of arbitrary will rather than as an objective social fact - an error shared with most schools of legal thought.

This subjectivist view receives its plausibility from the obvious fact that laws in modern societies are issued in the name of a person or group of persons: King, President, Parliament or Supreme Soviet. Furthermore, laws are made in favour of one sectional interest or another. This is all quite true but we know as well that so-called 'primitive' communities exist which have identifiable legal rules without an authority to issue them. Also the close correspondence of socio-economic and legal system (if the two can be separated at all) indicates that the legal 'will' is either socially restricted or socially determined. Laws may be made in favour of certain classes or sectional groups but in a society at any given time there are laws that would not be made even if clearly in the interests of the ruling classes or groups.

The value of understanding law as an objective social fact rather than as will is that one can then see laws not as orders from the rulers to the ruled but as the formal expression of relations between members of a social system (without of course denying that these relations may be relations of dominance and subjugation but equally without suggesting that such relations are merely personal matters). One can then see how it can be that classless societies and societies without state power (the two are not identical) have been able to have legal systems. Also one shifts law from the sphere of social control with its obvious implication that someone or something uncontrolled does the controlling - to that of social co-ordination. To put it subjectively, by prescribing some actions and proscribing other laws create a definite structure of expectations which allow people to conduct everyday

life with minimum effort. To put it objectively· law is the formal expression of a definite relatively stable set of social relations.

In this latter sense law must exist in any society since for a society to exist it must have a functioning economic system with an associated set of stable social relations. On the other hand, this 'law' need nowhere be codified, nor need it be willed, much less be formally the will of some special person or persons. It may only be fully articulated by the observing anthropologist. One should note here that law enforcement and punishment have no necessary connection with law as such. Just as the existence of law does not require an authority to make it, neither does even codified law presuppose an authority to enforce it. The best known example of this is the Icelandic Commonwealth of circa 1000 AD The Icelanders had a highly developed orally transmitted system of law dealing with the relations between aristocratic property-owning households existing in a context of no central political authority at all. Not that the Icelanders lacked a political life, but this was organised around the annual Althing which was primarily a legal meeting at which the law was recited and revised if necessary, and advice asked of and given by those respected for their legal knowledge or character. Judgements were also given at the Althing by publicly appointed judges but these were either about the amount of compensation one party rightfully should pay, i.e. factual judgements about what the law <u>said</u>, or they were <u>sentences</u> of outlawry for life or a given number of years. An outlawed man was precisely a man outside the law; he could be killed or his property seized by anyone without any compensation being payable to him or his relatives. Outlawry for a period as opposed to full outlawry was in fact ostracism; the outlawed man was expected to make over his Property to his friends or relatives and leave Iceland for the period of his sentence. The system was based on the public recognition of private vengeance and its transmutation from bloodshed to money payments, to a large extent the law was an accounting procedure for indicating where a fued should stop. Since there could be no public police authority in such a system its operation depended on a factual equality of persons or of their ability to draw on help. As the initial aristocratic democracy was transformed in a feudal direction by the emergence of powerful ecclesiastical and property owning fee s the legal system broke down. This decline into 'anarchy' was not the result of 'imperfections' in the legal system but rather as social and religious developments undermined the premises of the original social system the legal system reflecting these relations was likewise undermined.

The view that there is a necessary connection between law and punishment arises from the subjectivist view of law as a command. Sanctions are necessary to enforce the command (uphold the law against actual or potential law-breakers). What is required by the authorities is not just behaviour contingently not contravening the law, but obedience, a disposition to behaviour that will not contravene the law. Within this framework, in which one is only given the naked wills of the rulers and the ruled, it is quite impossible to see how punishments or sanctions could be dispensed with since by hypothesis the only stabilising elements is the will of the authorities. Given a more realistic view of law and society, things appear differently.

If law is the formal expression of definite social relations then punishment is either subsumed under law or is an arbitrary personal relationship having no invariable relation with law at all. Forgetting about the latter alternative - which makes punishment purely irrational we will examine the former, more realistic and empirically grounded, alternative. To say that punishment is subsumed under law is <u>not</u> to concede that there is a necessary connection between law and punishment but in fact is to argue the opposite. Law land punishment are not two separate things standing in some relation or other rather punishment is an element that may or may not be found in those social relations whose formal expression we call law. Nor is it the most interesting element or even essential to law, in systems without enforcement authorities it might be quite misleading to talk of 'punishment' when 'compensatory behaviour' is meant. Treatment' - as opposed to punishment - may also fall under law. Law in our sense does not exclude psychiatric or personality considerations, for these to be part of law it is only necessary that they be applied to everyone occupying the same mode of network of social relations. By defining law in terms of the formal expression of social relations one automatically abstracts from individuals and hence automatically law satisfies the <u>formal</u> criterion of justice that of treating equals equally. Naturally this does not make laws

in any other sense since what are equals before the law depends on the particular social relations existing and in highly developed societies on which social relations have received formal legal expression.

In the above I have tried to sketch an anarchist approach to law that makes law rational in the sense of being explicable. At the same time I have tried to sh that law as we think of it has not always existed and hence need not always exist By altering social relations we alter legal relations even if legal ideologies lag behind. Thus in terms of a view of law as a social reality I have tried to justi the anarchist vision of a society without 'police prisons or politicians . The recognition that there must be social order even if there is now law in the formal sense has been part of anarchism all along. The only difference here is that I a concerned to stress that formal 'law' is necessary to establish the expectations necessary for the operation of a complex socialised economy. This may be only an administrative matter but it is still law in my own and most other senses. In this field law functions pre-eminently as an instrument of social co-ordination an sanctions are almost irrelevant given the hypothesis of a worker self managed economy. For brevity I have omitted the critique of the current legal system which is unpleasantly close to the reality suggested by subjectivist theories in that one part of society (the police)is above the law and enforces it against the rest in an arbitrary fashion. It is reasonable to omit this critique since the majority of people seem to be arriving at it independently.

(FAAB. No. 3, Jan/Feb. 1975)

2. Workers Councils, Self Management and Syndicalism

The term workers council has been used to describe two very different phenomena on the one hand political assemblies composed of workers and on the other groups of workers managing (or co managing) industrial enterprises. The soviets and Arbeiter-und Soldatenrate are of the former type the factory committees and works councils are of the latter type. Whilst both types of institution have played a part in historical revolutions and both have been proposed by litertarian revolu tionaries as the basis for post revolutionary society, it is essential today to recognise the limitations of these forms if the statist and bureaucratic outcome of revolutions to date is to be avoided in the future

1. The essential feature of the soldiers and workers councils which appeared in Central and Eastern Europe in the first quarter of this century was that they were local geographical entities composed of delegates from factories and barracks. Despite endless leninist dronings about the Paris Commune the sole real difference of these councils from bourgeois democratic forms lay in their industrial as opposed to residential mode of election i e. in their class based franchise. (There is nothing inherently anti bourgeois in revocable mandates, unification of legislative and executive functions or limitation of official salaries in the U S. one can even find suburban communities still functioning as direct democracies

It is no linguistic accident that today 'soviet power' means power of the state and party bureaucracy. The soviet or workers' council is by definition a local power the existence of many such powers within a national economy calls into being a national power to integrate them. Already in Oriental Despotism we have an exampl of a national autocratic power arising on the basis of a multitude of local communi and such a phenomena is even more to be expected inthe context of a socialist revolution.

In the first place socialism means planned economy and in a modern economy the plann ing of industry is necessarily a national (or trans communal) enterprise. The planning of industry cannot be undertaken at a communal level simply because the sources of supply and users of products are usually situated beyond the geographica reach of the local authority. (Krus'chev tried to regionalise economic planning and control in the U.S.S.R in the late 1950 s - the results were even worse than with the previous centralised ministerial system). Since economic planning cannot be done locally it must be done centrally or not at all. In the latter case that of market economy the local soviet has no part to play in the direction of the economy.

Simply because of this a system of geographically based workers councils will need to create a central authority (and there are also many other practical and ideological considerations which would lead them to form such a 'council of councils'). Unless many such bodies were formed for different functions one can assume that this central body would elect further bodies out of itself - executives, committees of various sorts - which would employ permanent staffs to plan and implement their policies. Hence the control and planning of industry would be at least three steps removed from the factory floor and in the hands of a permanent bureaucracy. It should also be noted that the system of indirect election - delegates from a lower body to a higher body - will also lead to a concentration of party-political workers at the highest levels and hence the de facto rule of the party whether council forms are retained or not.

2. If the workers' councils were not to try to direct industry one would have workers' self-management in the sense that the works' committee of each factory would control its production. Assuming that the production plan was not handed down from elsewhere this would mean market socialism.

Even if a market socialist self-managed enterprise did not try to exploit any monopoly power it might have it would still act as a market enterprise, i.e. at any given structure of prices for its inputs and outputs it would produce at a definite combination of members taken in, hours worked and product produced. (The exact decision rule used is of no importance but would presumably be to maximise its members' well-being subject to the achievement of certain social objectives, e.g. donations to the local community). Within this system there is no guarantee of full employment (since there is no labour market on which wages may be bid down if all workers are co-owners or co-managers of their particular enterprise) and neither is there any assurance that if a sphere of production becomes 'unprofitable' resources will be withdrawn from it (since thre are no capitalists to lay workers off hours worked will be reduced but labour and capital will not be shifted to other occupations). In general the achievement of full employment and efficient use of resources in a market socialist system of self-managed enterprises requires further social organs above the level of the enterprise (or commune) and these constitute a central power.

3. The alternative to market socialism or central planning from above would be that factory committees federated to produce a common plan of production. The rational basis for such federal planning would of course be industrial i.e. syndicalist. In this way the preparation of a production plan for a particular branch of industry would draw directly on the knowledge of those who had to execute it. The production of a consistent national plan would still need to be worked out between such representative bodies of branches of industry but its drafting would not be so far removed from the factory floor as in other systems.

4. The above is not a proposal for a particular sort of economic planning but rather is an attempt to draw out the ultimate political consequences of the adoption of certain political or economic institutions. In particular it does not solve the rather difficult questions of the degree of enterprise autonomy (horizontal communication) or the place of local all-industry bodies (soviets) in economic planning. There is a lot of easy utopianism even in libertarian writings on the subject of economic planning (and in non-East European marxist writings there is little else). Even the largest computers today are incapable of performing the calculation of an optimal plan for an advanced economy (and there are also astronomical problems of data collection and theoretical formulation).

5. As organs of revolutionary struggle workers' councils and factory committees have rather different properties. Workers' councils are ideally suited to seizing military-political power on a local scale in the event of a weakening of the central authority but are not suited to the seizure of economic power. They might attempt to direct industry by the use of police powers but this is rarely successful. Factory committees however can seize economic power in individual factories and continue to manage them on the basis of a stable market environment. In its absence however they would have to form direct links with suppliers and users and unless a materials allocation authority was imposed from above they would then have to

form their own industrial associations for production and distribution. Of course if the seizure of direct economic power was able to be opposed by the police and military forces of the state and bourgeoisie then such economic power could only be protected by the formation of local politico-military counterpowers, i.e. armed workers' councils.

6. These latter points throw light on the question of work-ins. If a work-in contents itself with producing stocks of finished goods for the factory owner, it might have some significance as a demonstration but it is not a revolutionary act. If however, the goods are sold not on the owner's account(which would be the same thing) but on the factory committee's account, then the line separating the doubtfully legal from the revolutionary has been passed. In such a situation the factory committee would find it hard to sell its goods and would face a critical shortage of working capital even if it could find suppliers. Thus it would have to admit defeat move further into illegality by selling off stocks of materials and fixed capital or find other factory committees willing to extend it credit. It is the spread of such work-ins that turns a pre-revolutionary situation of general strikes, factory occupations and the formation of local workers' councils into a revolution.

7. An anarchist industrial strategy must be directed towards the production of this situation. It requires therefore building up shop committees; first of all within particular unions, later of all unionists in a shop and the formation on the basis of these of a works committee representing all workers (including the lower 'salariat') in an enterprise. Parallel to this it requires the creation of links between shops in an area (again initially on an intra-union and later an inter-union basis). The formation of such workers' organisations can proceed initially on the basis of current interests and demands but in the process it can also give rise to a greater class solidarity and more sharply focussed class consciousness. Beyond this however,anarchists would have also to put forward positive programmes, e.g. 'syndifi tion' rather than nationalisation under parliament workers' control rather than workers' participation or co-management, etc. This background of positive suggestions would provide essential guidelines for 'spontaneous' organisation during a revolutionary takeover. It should be remembered that whereas the essential structur of the post-revolutionary economy of Barcelona was worked out by CNT committees in a few days in 1936 - indeed even before the street fighting ended - the work of propaganda that made this possible had occupied the previous 60 years and that this is the only example yet of an economy organised by the workers themselves.

(FAAB, No. 2, Nov/Dec. 1974)

3. <u>The Split - A Monash Anarchist Perspective</u>

One is tempted to write a bitter and biassed account of the 'Unitarian Peace' Anarchist Conference and justify one's position as regarding the split. However such a limited view of political history will not serve anarchists, syndicalists, libertarian socialists and people (the ones whose cause we are all championing because after all, we are people).

The origins of the rifts between the multi-facetted anarchist tendencies and the primarily industrially inclined synidcalist movements have been highly complex and unique.

To some observers they have been seen as contradictory, to others as complementary. The Australian anarcho syndicalist movement has contained most of the diverse tendencies. Examples of the movements which are specifically anarchist in form are, for example, on one extreme, the Sydney Individualists' (as they were dubbed at the F.A.A. Congress) who advocate a mixture of Max Stirner's 'Egoist' philosophy, free expression based on Reichian sexuality, and essentially formless structures. Their opposition to any compromise with notions of leadership, representation, authority, institutions, property or abstract notions of 'rights' was seen by many comrades as a personal attack, ohter comrades merely viewed their position as an unviable, self-contradictory and inherently 'nihilist' attitude. Other comrades supported them.

Other anarchists groupings which could be mentioned, are anarcho-feminist groups who reject "male politics" and who see social relationships as being based on a patriarchal exploitative system. The structures, attitudes and activities of anarcho-feminists naturally differs widely, but there is a near complete agreement on their attitude towards male involvement in anarcho-feminist activities. A manifestation of this was the exclusion of males from the 1975 Anarcho-Feminist Conference. This caused resentment by (mainly) males, and was a point of contention in the "Unitarian Peace" Conference as it was in the first F.A.A. Conference.

A significant development about the "Unitarian Peace" Conference was that only individual feminists participated in the Conference. Also, many of those who did attend voiced their disgust of power politics of men. Some of the major anarchist groups - the university groups, also differed widely in their political approach from each other. This was shown by the individual student members of different universities' reaction to the walkout (Monash and some Latrobe people staying; the Macquarie person and some Latrobe people leaving). Resentment was shown by a Monash Anarchist when the revolutionary significance of students or anarchists on "the dole" was belittled by a syndicalist worker. Then the notion of defining "work" became the issue capitalised on to split the conference between those who pressed for the priority of industrial action over and above any other form of revolutionary action, and those who rejected the notion for its limitations. Thus it was the economic role of anarchists which became the scene of some of the bitterest debate of the conference.

Now turning to the syndicalist group (or "libertarian socialists" as the ex-trotskyists pressed for). Most of the workers (i.e. employees) at the conference saw the necessity of forming a structured, cohesive group centred around "LINK"-type industrial activity. Their view was that the conference was getting nowhere - that too much time had been wasted regarding the structure of the conference and that not enough consideration had been given to shop-floor politics.

After the walk-out (which incidentally, was not debated-thereby exemplifying the conflict, mistrust and complete underestimation of people) proposals such as the setting up of a secretariat, the closing down of the Anarchist Conference (i.e. a lock-out), the deliberate exclusion of Anarchist-individualists from proposed "libertarian" socialist conferences in the future, and secession from the F.A.A. were discussed.

After holding a meeting lasting about an hour, the "libertarian" socialist tendency returned to the "Peace Church". A meeting was held and the presence of a chairperson partly offset the continued development of bitterness and rancour. However there were still sporadic violent interruptions, incidents of near-hysterical emotionalism, and personal abuse. We personally concluded that, most divisive issues of large meetings in future should be effectively chaired by comrades elected hourly - as this was a major factor in contributing to the build up of tension and impatience.

The sides were presented. The Anarchists were almost unanimous in requesting that the fait-accompli of a "libertarian" socialist (or "syndicalist") group remain federated within the F.A.A., and the Anarchists resented that no discussion had occurred about the split prior to the walkout. To this one of the "ex-Trotskyists" replied "we don't want to have the Libertarian Socialists under the umbrella of the F.A.A.". The Anarchists also asked the custodian of the hall (a Libertarian Socialist) if we could continue the Conference until its scheduled end. This was denied... The property disputes - a feature of the whole conference - and a symptom of a divorce had occurred. A sign that as far as the "leaders"of the walkout were concerned, that the split was final.

Some members of both tendencies were gentler and more concilliatory, realising that future co-operation between the groups was not out of the question. People from both sides looked panicky and worried - which is not surprising considering the number of close friendships which were broken... It was asked to those who walked out to raise their hands - over forty comrades raised thair hands. It was then put to them, "How many would continue with the conference?" - three put up their hands. We concluded that it is, at least, a separation. The anarchists' last plea was that they also were syndicalists - this met with hostility.

We believe that there are two ways of looking at the Libertarian Socialist Federation. One, that it is a trotskyist push - we maintain that some of the active provocateurs of the split were in SYA less than twelve months ago. (We don't expect anyone to overcome authoritarian conditioning in such a time). Two, that it has a genuine anarcho-syndicalist basis - and it may operate on genuine syndicalist lines. The ex-trot push held, or rather "railroaded" the 'Unitarian Peace" Conference without consulting any other Victorian group as to the agenda. No pre-conference was held - and responsibility for the venue was vested in the hands of one person (on the Libertarian Socialist editorial board). It is true that his reaction to close the church was childish, prompted by the behaviour of some anonymous people who painted a slogan on the Church wall. We are not saying that provocation for the split was from one side. In fact, some of the individualists were not prepared to compromise their position on structure and everyone heckled speakers. We suggest that anarchists not participate in the Libertarian Socialist Federation until we have concrete assurances that it is a genuine SYNDICALIST organisation. We accept a structure but not a secretariat which will ultimately mean "democratic centralism".

To conclude, we wish the Syndicalist Movement in Australia every success and hope that we foster mutual respect between the people in the two federations.

And please, comrades, please never make it so that we need to ask again, "Which side are you on?"

(FAAB, Monash Edition, 1976)

4. Editorial. SMG Brisbane

It is one thing to say, as above, that we "accept the necessity of cooperation, planning and organization" and quite another to build organization. And when we aim to develop "a strong Australian Section" of the international libertarian movement we have to ask what constitutes organizational strength. Answereing these questions should be our major interest at the moment. At the conference earlier this year the Brisbane S.M.G. distributed three papers presenting our viewpoint on strategy and tactics, on internal democracy and on a libertarian political programme. It seems to us that dealing with at least these three matters is a prerequisite to successful organisation and therefore to regional regroupment. This belief is not pulled out of a hat but is based on our experience of trying to organize without satisfying these prerequisites. At various times we have experienced lack of direction or crisis in one of these areas, which forced us to come to grips with the problem.

We did this by theoretical discussion which produced a coherent position on these matters. We thereby created the minimum common denominator of cohesion necessary for our organization to operate well.

At the conference such subjects did not assume any larger proportion than a number of other matters - marxism and anarchism, personal life, education and so forth. Except for some aspects of strategy (e.g. working in unions) they were hardly discussed at all. We think this explained some of the aimlessness at the conference. Therefore we raise these issues again in the hope of this

time provoking discussion, preferably through the bulletin. In this bulletin we reproduce our internal democracy statement. We also attach our political programme. Those of you who were at the conference would have seen earlier drafts of both statements. An article on strategy and tactics makes a number of general points and attempts to give a few illustrations.

Why are these three areas crucial to organization? Firstly, the need for establishing principles of internal democracy is the same need that will lead people in a libertarian society to have regulated ways of working and to write laws. What we found was that we needed to formalize our relationships as libertarians. We could not recreate our organization anew each time we met. Instead we had to formulate principles of operation - how to integrate new members, how to treat the existence of differing levels of knowledge, ability and experience, the function of cells as compared to general meetings and so on. Without such written principles we could not be organized. With them new members knew what was expected of them and what they could demand and cells and individuals could work freely without constant consultations. We were able to sum up the lessons of crises in our internal functioning and conclude them or at least approach such difficulties with less emotional confusion and more clarity if they recurred. We expect always to see new issues arise in this area, especially as we grow. We expect all activist groups will experience these problems in different ways and at different times. They should always be seen as a direct experience of the problems of the kind of democracy we are trying to build. The principles we establish are relevant to our understanding of that democracy. (This point will be much more apparent when we are a mass movement). Constituting these principles in writing will make our organization more effective and will prevent our having the same experience again and again.

Secondly - a political programme. We believe it useful for every group to detail such a programme, assuming, of course, that it would be improved over the years like the internal democracy statement. Some would argue that libertarians should not have "blueprints". But our understanding of the creative work of the libertarian mass movements of the past, our critical analysis of the institutions of this society and our own experience of building libertarian organization ourselves lead us inevitably to certain principles of social and economic organization. When crises occur or when the most important issues are discussed in capitalist society, libertarians will have to be there putting forward these principles in a unified and organized way. We will have need of a clear idea of how social decision-making should be organized and how wealth should be distributed. The contemporary representatives of every other political stream have their programmes which offer answers to these questions and when they present them we must be able to show that their answers are wrong.

Furthermore, a programme is the basis for the cohesiveness of a libertarian group which can only rely on theoretical agreement for its capability to act as a unified force - whereas an authoritarian organization relies on obedience. Without such cohesion we must resign ourselves to being a non-organization which is in constant crisis because of ver-present disagreement over basic premises and which cannot carry out unified activity because of differences, regular changeover of membership and the presence of reformists, counter-culturalists, individualists, etc. The nine points in the membership and aims statement of FAA could never be the basis of sufficient agreement to create cohesiveness. They implicitly raise more questions than they answer. What is "libertarian socialism" or a "cooperative social economy without the state". What are "the theoretical, ideological-cultural, moral and material organizational prerequisites" for self-management. These nine points partially define what are we against - capitalism, state socialism, sexism, racism, statism etc - but not what we are for. Negative unity is typical of popular fronts and many of us have been involved in their sad fates. The nine points are really an expression of our inability, so far, to find theoretical unity.

Until we do this we will not be able to get organized. These last general points about the FAA apply to regional groups especially those who use the nine points as the required level of agreement in their group and even more so to those who make no attempt to set up any level of agreement.

Thirdly - strategy and tactics. Taking the FAA aims again - how do we "propagate the general idea of libertarian socialism" and how do we "initiate, assist and participate in practical struggles for partial objectives" on the basis of their relation to libertarian aims. Some ways of acting will contradict or undermine our aims. Also we need to assign priorities which may limit some areas where we might like to work. At the conference we distributed a six point statement which clarified many of our views on strategy and tactics. In this bulletin we make some attempt to answer some of these questions raised by the FAA aims.

Many of the concerns expressed here seem to be felt in sections of the libertarian movement in Europe. A recent letter from ORA in France says that they broke from the French Anarchist Federation because it was "a traditional anarchist 'organization'. This means it was composed of a mixture of anarcho-syndicalists, communist-anarchists, individualists, pacifists and so on. Because of that, the FA has never been able to reach a theoretical coherence." We think this is a similar situation to that of the FAA. ORA goes on to say: "From the historical experience of the Russian and Spanish revolutions, we learnt that a strongly organized libertarian communist movement playing an active part in the class struggle is necessary to prevent a revolution from being taken over by all kinds of authoritarians (Bolsheviks, Marxist-Leninists, Social-Democrats...)".

We could not agree more. By 1937 the libertarian movement had experienced massive defeat. This concluded an assault on hierarchical society which had commenced in the nineteenth century. In the late fifties and sixties small groups began to appear again (those groups which had hung on since the thirties were mostly moribund). Now the libertarian movement faces the task of rebuilding itself for another assault which could be more powerful because of the lessons available from the past. But only if we learn those lessons and only if we invest our present situation with all the seriousness which it merits. It is quite simple - whether this assault succeeds depends on what we do now. If we do not establish cohesive organization and coherent theory we will fail.

<u>On Suggestions for a Conference</u>

We believe it is pointless to have a conference in 1976 as nothing has changed. We should not hold conferences out of habit, they consume too much energy. They should be held when they promise a qualitative step forward at the national level which will only follow developments at the regional level and this has <u>not yet occurred.</u> We have nothing to organize nationally. At the last conference we established a means of communication. This would still seem to be as far as we can go nationally. Since there is little common theory or common levels of organization our ability to act together is low.

Also we should not be holding conferences to win people to our ideas. For one thing our ideas are too divergent or at least too many issues are unresolved. For another, winning people is the task of regional groups not national meetings. Therefore any future conferences should be closed not "come one, come all" as in Sydney. Another obvious reason for closed conferences is so that we will not have to, at every new conference, re-establish levels of common opinion which we reached at conferences before. For example, since we voted to "accept the necessity of...planning and organization" no theoretical discussions of whether libertarians should organize or not should occur and no individualist anarchists should be allowed to attend.

The only way of operating a closed conference is to have each regional group issue credentials (on the basis of that groups presumed acceptance of the membership and aims statement of the FAA) to delegates. Individual affiliates who state their agreement with the membership and aims statement could attend. As was suggested earlier, ultimately a national organization of libertarians would, we hope, have a far more detailed basic level of agreement than these simple points. Another aim of such procedures is to exclude journalists, marxist leninists etc, and police spies. Such, anyway, are our suggestions.

(FAAB, Sept-Oct. 1975)

5. Some Provisional Points of Disagreement with the Comrades of the Brisbane SMG.

i. On the FAA organisational platform.

There are two ways to form an organisation to group together existing organisations and individuals around a common platform of aims and values and then to work towards a common theoretical/political position by means of the analysis of the actual situation or to form an absolutely precise programme and recruit individuals to it The former method is the one that the Melbourne comrades concerned thought the FAA should follow; the latter is the one characteristic of every trotskyist/leninist group.

If one were to read only the SMG editorial in the Sept/Oct. 10th FAAB - and especially their implicitly approving references to the ORA - without reading their statement "Internal Democracy" it would be difficult to believe that the SMG was not an adherent of the second method of forming organisations. On the face of it the SMG criticism of the FAA would appear to involve a number of highly dubious positions: that the growth of the revolutionary movement is to be identified with the growth of a single organisation that an organisation cannot grow - or at least is not healthy - if there is theoretical disagreement within it; that an organisation must always be capable of unified action and that theoretical disagreement makes unified action impossible.

These positions are, of course, perfectly familiar - being part of the creed of every left-wing sect - and they would appear to be simple common sense. Unfortunately it is not in the least clear that any successful or even important mass movement has exemplified them whereas history is full of examples of small groups for whom they have been self-evident truths.

This is hardly surprising for the positions listed above are the basic these of sectarianism. Two different organisations holding the above principles cannot cooperate: nor can a single such organisation take any mass movement seriously (except for manipulative purposes) because the mass movement lacks the (correct) programme. A non-opportunist (i.e. non-leninist) group holding to the above principles will necessarily be a failure.

It is true, as the Brisbane comrades say, that in a libertarian organisation agreement of ideas must replace authoritarian compulsion, but it is not strictly correct to call this 'theoretical agreement' since for the purposes of revolutionary action it is political, strategic and tactical agreement that is important. Theory has its effects at these levels but it is only one ingredient in a complex also involving goals and analysis of the concrete situation. In trying to achieve agreement it seems better to start with these since the available theories are just the results of theorising other peoples' goals and situations.

The presence of different theoretical lines in the FAA seems a rather small price to pay for avoiding sectarian isolation. Providing the FAA has a federal structure there does not seem at present any objection to distinct tactical lines (providing anarchists generally are not compromised by terrorists, chaotists and other lunatics claiming to act as members of the FAA). The FAA is an attempt to foster the anarchist movement in Australia but this is not the same thing as building up particular anarchist organisations. The distinction between organisation and movement is an important one. Individual organisations within the FAA, whether geographical or national, should be able to engage in their own political activity and develop strategies in their own name. They would no doubt use the structure of the FAA to argue for their approach within anarchist ranks but it is a rather different question whether the programmes of individual organisations should be promoted to being that of the FAA. Apart from the resulting splits this would mean that strategies were experimented with on a national level rather than locally. In a country as regionalised as Australia, this would seem simply a mistake. A strategy "correct" in one state may be "incorrect' in another and, unless one believes that one has already found the correct strategy, it would seem the more experimentation the better. Of course one should not pursue heterogeneity for its own sake, but equally one should be wary of pursuing cohesion for its own sake. Cohesion can always be achieved cheaply by a purge, but small is not always beautiful.

If we accept that the main problem in Australia at present is not the organisation of a revolutionary striking force but the propagation of reasonably coherent libertarian ideas (several coherent versions exist), the development of popular militancy and radicalism and, eventually, the development of libertarian mass organisations, then it does seem that something of the looseness of the current programme is a suitable basis for mutual discussion and joint action for, whatever the SMG might say, the current programme does exclude individualists, anti-organisation chaotists, social democrats and marxist-leninists.

(It is disquieting to see the Brisbane comrades quoting the ORA with approval. Whilst traditional anarchists groups in countries without revolutionary experience are incoherent mixtures of completely opposed tendencies, the ORA formula simply reflects the degeneracy of traditional anarchist communism and has historically formed the bridge either to stalinism - as in the case of the author of the ORA programme - or to the more violent varieties of trotskyism in the case of the English ORA and the predecessors of the French one. This phenomenon will be discussed at some length in the forthcoming Melbourne Anarchist Archives edition of the Arshinov "Platform of the Libertarian Communists" which will also include other documents such as Malatesta's criticisms of the "Platform" and the 1936 programme of the CNT).

2. <u>On conferences</u>

The implication of the SMG's position on conferences is that their purpose is to give rise to organisational developments. This is one purpose conferences might serve, but it is hardly the only one. Some Melbourne anarchists had suggested calling a fairly sharply defined conference to discuss issues that had not been properly discussed at Sydney. These were anarchism and organisation (pre- and post-revolutionary); anarchists and trade unions; anarchism and social theory. After the Canberra anarchism/feminism conference it was also suggested that this be the subject of a non-separatist discussion. It is not clear that one needs regional or national organisation to discuss these questions; one only needs ideas. To ensure that the latter criterion was satisfied it was intended that discussion should be based on formal papers read to the conference and that discussion groups should play only a subordinate part.

It might be argued that one does not need a conference to discuss these questions since the discussion could be carried out in the various bulletins and that conferences should only be called to make political or organisational decisions. This however would be wrong. There have been a stream of articles on these questions in FAAB and VRAB in the past year without anyone having written replies - even the Brisbane SMG if one accepts their comments on some minor points in the last FAAB. It appears that anarchists are incapable of carrying on written discussions. In this situation it seems we have to hold conferences to get any theoretical development.

Obviously there could be no such conference without the participation of the SMG because they are the only anarchist group in Australia with a highly developed ideology. However there are people in Victoria with highly developed theoretical positions on the subjects above who are not in complete agreement with the SMG and people in Sydney with highly developed positions on feminism who might not agree with either. A productive conference would require at least tri-state participation.

If a conference is to discuss ideas rather than detailed organisational and political proposals it does not seem so important that it be closed. In particular one may wish to invite selected non-anarchists to contribute on various subjects and one would certainly want to open the discussion on anarchism and feminism to feminists who were not members of trotskyist groups (separatists of course would be self-excluded).

3. <u>On students</u>

Whilst students are (to an exceptionally minimal extent) "order-takers" whilst at university and may, when they leave university, become "order-takers" in some private or governmental office, it is simply fetuous to identify their situation with that of industrial or clerical workers. If anything one should compare the modern humanities student with an independent commodity producer. Just as the latter produces under his/her own control a product for sale on a market so the student produces his/her essay for marks. There are essay deadlines of course but then even independent commodity producers have to sell their product on time if they don't want to starve (a somewhat more serious matter than failing). Admittedly in institutions where students have forced a continuous assessment on the academics (or where academics, for their own peculiar reasons, have forced it on the students) a situation rather more like piecework is found but in general it is hard to imagine a freer life situation than that of a university student.

As the writer of the article "Strategy and Tactics" says, libertarian ideas have been popular among students. What is worrying however is that there seems to be an almost perfect <u>negative</u> correlation between actual oppression (in terms of order-taking) and perceived oppression. One would like a theory of this phenomenon· indeed in the absence of a theory one might suspect that one's university agitation would come to nothing.

Whilst in a libertarian society one would have a libertarian university (or more likely no such institution at all) this shows absolutely nothing as to whether a struggle for self-management at the university is an important, or even an appropriate, part of a libertarian strategy. To decide this question one needs a theory of the university in society. Do students from a self-managed university go on to create self-managed institutions outside the university? Are we concerned that, say, lawyers should have enjoyed themselves at university? And why do students go to university anyway? (Some start towards

answering these questions that were made in the article "The university as production and consumption" reprinted in Anarchist Papers no.1 by Melbourne Anarchist Archives). It is important to answer these questions since one's attitude to students will rather crucially depend on whether one regards them as a variety of skilled worker or as a "petit cadre" of capital like policemen or prison warders

4. On the hierarchy criterion

This leads on to another point: with the exception of industrial workers and lower clerical workers most members of hierarchies are both order-givers and order-takers. (One cannot save students this way because just as with children, theirs is an order-taking situation they grow out of. Neither children nor students form a class in any ordinary sense). The criterion gives no clue to the characterisation of these intermediate grades. Indeed one might wonder if there are any pure order-givers at all. The individual capitalist is not automomous - far from it. The hierarchy criterion gives no guidance for social analysis once one goes beyond the bottom of the pyramid. Yet a concentration on the bottom of the pyramid is exactly what the article on 'Strategy and Tactics' accuses the writer in VRAB of having done. The Cardan criterion hence delineates almost exactly the same group as the Marx criterion (sale of labour power for production). It applies perhaps to a larger number of societies but only because with Cardanist principles it is impossible to distinguish between different types of societies. For the same reason it is impossible to understand how they work.

* * *

Since the above sounds rather negative in tone I should like to make the following comments in conclusion·

a) I am totally in agreement with the SMG on the necessity of theoretical clarity and the adoption of definite principles of organisation. Where we differ is that I think that different theoretical tendencies (e.g. theirs and mine!)may profitably co-exist in the FAA.

b) Despite my comments on students I am a student myself and have been for several years under various different regimens. Also the attacks on student anarchists in the VRAB were written by students; the criticism they should receive is that they exhibit typical student masochism!

c) My opposition to 'Cardan-ism' is not to Cardan's own work but to its effects on others. Cardan's main works are the records of his struggle to work through the orthodox vulgar marxism of his trotskyist and stalinist past. The results he arrives at are in general rather unimpressive compared with those of Marx but Cardan himself retains the memory of the marxism he has worked through and can use it where it is appropriate. Those who merely take over the results of Cardan's labours do not have this advantage. They are also likely to be caught out by the more intellectually nimble authoritarians if they imagine that Cardan's critique settles the question of marxism for more than the marxism he started from.

(FAAB, Nov-Dec. 1975)

PART D: ANARCHISM AND THE 1975 POLITICAL CRISIS

1. FAAB Editorial November 1975

The original conception of this issue of FAAB was that it should survey the year since we recommenced publication and indicate some directions forward. Three major articles were planned: one on political study groups for anarchists; one on rank-and-file journals and education theory; one on management science and theories of organisation. Because of the current political situation these articles will appear either in a truncated form or not at all and the space thus saved will be filled by anarchist analyses, manifestoes and leaflets on the Fraser coup and the elections.

The Melbourne anarchists went into action on the Tuesday afternoon of Whitlam's dismissal - they had also been part of the "jeer-squad" at the Liberals mass rally some weeks previously - and had a poster and two leaflets out by the Friday 14th mass rally in Melbourne. (Both are printed in this FAAB). A meeting was held that night of those who could be contacted at the rally. The general line taken was that of a campaign against a Fraser government and a call for working-class self-activity to defeat it. At a meeting of the Spanish community, a comrade successfully moved a resolution criticising Hawke for damping down the trade union's spontaneous response to Fraser's coup; there is disagreement however within the Melbourne anarchists on whether a general strike called by the ACTU would have been effective in stopping Fraser.

Fraser's action is probably the most revolutionary one in Australian politics to date. It has fractured - if not yet shattered - the reformist illusions of many labour Party voters. It has shown the need for (because of the lack of) extra-parliamentary power to maintain working-class political representation. It has also made the stability of future federal governments highly problematic. All this creates openings for anarchist propaganda completely absent two months ago. Even if the A.L.P. is returned to power (with the necessary majorities in both houses) the doubt will have been sown. If - as is more likely - the A.L.P. does not win outright, or if Fraser should win outright, the opportunities for propaganda will be correspondingly increased. Fraser's coup has introduced open class struggle into Australian politics; an Australian revolution in our time is now a possibility.

(FAAB, Nov - Dec, 1975)

2. Beyond the current crisis: Political perspectives for Australian Labour

The dismissal of the Australian Labor Party government by Governor-General Kerr merely officially confirmed what had been made obvious by the previous three years of Senate obstruction and the twenty-three years of direct Liberal-Country Party rule before that. A Labor government is impossible under the existing Australian system.

It is impossible because the existing electoral boundaries give a disproportionate number of seats to the reactionary Country Party. It is impossible because even complete equalisation of the number of voters per seat would under-represent the huge A.L.P. majorities which pile up in the inner city working-class electorates. It is impossible because even Australian-owned industry is so intimately linked economically to foreign owned and controlled industry that politically motivated decisions by international capital have repercussions throughout the economy that the government cannot control. It is impossible because a Labor government could count on neither the loyalty of top civil servants nor the neutrality of

the crown's appointees. It is impossible finally because even if the conservative parties are defeated within the system they change the rules of the game. The Liberal Party is by no means committed to the principles of liberal democracy.

It has long been known that the Australian system was loaded against the Labor Party; it did not need Kerr and Fraser to tell us that! The real significance of the Fraser coup is that it introduced a new principle to Australian politics: in future the government must have a majority in both houses of parliament. Since the two houses are elected on quite different bases this is likely not to be the case in other than landslide victories for one side or the other. In Senate elections the geographical concentration of labor voters within a state is not important and so in the long run the A.L.P. can be expected to be the dominant force in the Senate. If it applies the Fraser doctrine that a party with half the Senate seats may quite properly prevent the passage of Lower House bills-including the vital supply bills - than the conservative coalition will also find itself in the position of being unable to govern. The system is so loaded against Labor that it cannot ordinarily expect to be the government; if it is willing however to use the weapons forged by Fraser it can ordinarily prevent anyone else being the government. Unless the Labor Party leadership decides to capitulate the Australian political system is headed towards general paralysis.

This possibility of paralysis can be avoided in two ways. The Senate can be abolished or the electoral boundaries reformed. In the long run abolition of the Senate would benefit the conservatives provided that they maintained (and improved) the existing gerrymander. However the whole pattern of liberal and conservative thought would be against its abolition and it would require a referendum to do so. The other way of avoiding paralysis is to dismantle the garrymander in the House of Representatives electoral boundaries; this the Country Party would never allow the Liberals to do and neither would the Liberals take such a decision knowing that it might keep them out of power for decades. Change within the system is highly unlikely; the most likely thing-and the worst possible thing is that the Labor Party may once again resign itself to perpetual opposition.

Despite the popular support for Whitlam generated by the denial of Supply and the threat of extra-parliamentary action by the unions Fraser knocked off the government without any trouble at all. Could the unions have saved the Labor government? The answer is simply 'No'. One can call a general strike against a government but not against an opposition. Nor will a demonstration general strike, serve any purpose during an election campaign unless it can frighten potential Fraser-voters into voting labor. Fraser is not worried by a one day general strike: the only general strike that would worry him would be one that lasted until we were all on the edge of a crisis. The Senate "strike" showed that whatever his faults Fraser does not lack nerves. He is not afraid of ruining the economy, his job is quite safe. The only strike action that might have an effect would be a campaign of strikes against business interests supporting Fraser. This would involve a programme of research into the business interests of Liberal-Country Party members and into the sources of Liberal-Country Party funds. Such strikes would not be for demonstration purposes; they would be intended to hurt. This sort of action would also have the benefit that it would involve much wider circles of workers than the demonstrations called in association with short period national general strikes. It would also make industry much less confident of Fraser's ability to govern.

The current election campaign has only two likely outcomes; one a Fraser government in both houses and the other a Fraser government with a Labor Senate. The latter is the most likely by far and consequently there are two further possibilities: Labor may win both houses on the popular backlash

and have to be dispatched by some new dirty tricks or, somewhat less likely, Fraser may decide that the level of political and economic unrest justifies declaring a state of emergency and postponing the elections.

The reasons for predicting a political deadlock have been given above; even if parts of the urban salaried and professional groups vote for Fraser, the working-class will be more solidly behind the Labor Party than ever before. Fraser can only hope to win both houses of parliament if the Labor Party is largely denied access to the media and the entire press unites behind him immediately. This he will probably try to achieve by selective publication of suitably "doctored" and "scandalous" government files. The time until the election however is probably too short for such a campaign to succeed. This consideration, and the one that Labor might naturally gain the Senate, must sorely tempt Fraser to use the very strength of the popular agitation for Labor as a reason for denying it electoral expression. Declaration of a state of emergency however would lead to massive popular reaction and thus to Fraser's removal by his own class or to a violent confrontation in which Australia's armed forces - even if they support Fraser - would be totally inadequate to control even the cities on the eastern seabord. (If the Liberals do achieve power it is imperative that the working class do all in their power to prevent the expansion of the army).

The inability of the Labor Party to win and hold power within the system, and the complete unlikelihood of the ruling classes deciding to surrender it means that the working class must develop an extra-parliamentary strategy. The error of the Labor Party has been to hope to achieve power by becoming a "national" party. The Liberal and Country parties are consciously sectional, the one represents urban capital, its various dependents and its overseas masters and the other, the special interests of rural capital. The Labor movement must accept battle on the terrain it is offered - the terrain of class. This means uniting urban blue and white collar workers against capital and against the country. If the urban white collar workers can be detached from the Liberal party the letter will become more dependent on the Country party. The more concessions it makes to the latter, the further it will alienate urban white collar interests. At the same time as urban capital is forced into electoral reliance on rural interests economic development and the accompanying rural depopulation will be weakening its base.

The struggle against urban capital will proceed through the dismantling of the arbitration system and its replacement by collective bargaining; through the development of joint action by blue and white collar unions (whether from above or below), through the development of organs of worker control on the shop floor. It will also proceed through a struggle for the control of local government against the local representatives of capital and the bureaucratic and corrupt members of the A.L.P. local government "machine". Once this struggle has succeeded to the point that the workers in a firm, a region, or an industry can force their own planning decisions on management it will be possible to turn to the question of developing a rural strategy.

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Whilst the countryside is at present united behind its reactionary political representatives the ideology in terms of which it is united is profoundly contradictory. The farmer is opposed to "Socialism" - by which he means government interference with industry, trade and credit and government support for special interest groups - but the whole rationale of the Country Party is to ensure precisely this interference and support for the farmer. The Country Party is also contradictory in its composition; it unites rural big capital

with farming families almost on the poverty line. These contradictions would make it possible to seek to detach rural small capital from the urban-rural capitalist bloc, probably by development of labour enclaves within the rural towns.

The above suggestions for a long term working class strategy are not utopian, yet they lead - as no electorally-based strategy can lead - to working-class power. This power is to be used to expropriate urban (and foreign) capital. (Socialising farming is a very different and more complex question than need not be resolved immediately). If this power has been based on the institution built up by workers at the firm, industry and city level that is where it should remain. It is not to be given away to a new socialist national parliament ruling through the old capitalist public service bureaucracy. The control of industry must remain in the hands of the economic organisations of the white and blue collar workers even though industry will belong not to them but to society as a whole. This is what the workers' movement should aim for, not for largely illusory, and perhaps unobtainable, adjustments within the existing capitalist system.

(Leaflet distributed in Melbourne,
Friday 14th May).

(FAAB, Nov-Dec, 1975)

3. An Agitational Leaflet

NOW! AUSTRALIA! LEGAL COUP d'ETAT

IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE?

The crucial issue is one of POWER! It is a drive by vested interests: Fraser/Kerr Anthony/multinationals; to reassert their control over the Australian people and government.

They control the economy -
- They must control the GOVERNMENT.

DEMOCRACY to them means a system that protects their interests. FREEDOM has absolutely NOTHING to do with it. Should they decide to alter the system, by whatever means, WE, THE PEOPLE, are totally powerless to challenge them through the SYSTEM.

Because it is their system/they have the POWER.

1. ARMY: (conservative - DLP - Liberals; being resentful of army cuts)
2. POLICE: (police power implies police state)
3. PENAL CLAUSES: (Fraser's attitude to the ready use of repressive measures against strikes and strikers is very well known)
4. CONTROL OF THE MEDIA: (i: censures of A.B.C., ii: and no time available for the A.L.P. on commercial stations).
5. STATE OF EMERGENCY: (Fraser has the power to declare an emergency and thus POSTPONE THE ELECTIONS and repress the freedom of expression).

Fraser's scheme for a right wing coup has one clear historical precedent: HITLER! Hitler had won an election LEGALLY with no policies, manipulated constitutional convention to gain TOTAL POWER THROUGH COLLABORATION with the GERMAN CHANCELLOR (in this case, KERR). Furthermore, the Nazi's bombing of the Reichstag (German house of parliament) WEAPON - the RIGHT TO STRIKE! That right to strike has been

denied in the past by the LIB/CP and is even more threatened by the present right-wing takeover. To defeat that challenge, mass ORGANISATION is the KEY to counter the vast economic and military power of the right!!

These organisations, set up in every factory and work place, in every suburb and town, would be the basis for the people to defend their rights and express their views and organise their lives autonomously. We must guard ourselves against being deceived into believing that this CRISIS is EXTRA-ORDINARY. Even should the Labor Party succeed at the polls (if we get that far) the forces that PRODUCED AND DIRECTED the present crisis are those which maintain the capitalist system. LOOPHOLES can always be created and exploited - THE RIGHT WING OFFENSIVE CAN NEVER BE DEFEATED ON A PARLIAMENTARY LEVEL.

DON'T VOTE - ORGANISE

(Poster/leaflet distributed Friday 14th November. Spelling and expression slightly changed. The editor takes no responsibility for the - originally stalinist - allegation that the council communist van der Lubbe who bombed the Reichstag was a NAZI. He may have made a bad mistake but that is another matter. Potential terrorists however, should take note that it was a mistake).

(FAAB, Nov-Dec, 1975)

4. General Strike against Fraser?

The demands - put out by the various trotskyist sects - for a general strike to remove Fraser, smash the Senate and bring Labour to power are just pseudo-revolutionary phrase-mongering. The myth of the general strike has now passed from anarcho-syndicalism to trotskyism and in so doing has become a pure dream: instead of being called by revolutionary syndicalist unions leading a majority of the organised workers it is now somehow to be run by the existing reformist unions.

One has to distinguish general strikes arising from below - what Luxemburg called "mass strikes" - from general strikes called from above. To call for a general strike normally means to call on the responsible union authorities to declare one. (One might pretend that one is calling on all workers individually to strike and then create new organisations but this is plainly utopian). The ACTU leadership has refused to do so; partially in order to stop a developing mass strike (as was a possibility immediately after Whitlam's dismissal) and partially because they recognise that a general strike called under their auspices would probably not succeed in its object.

One must consider their problems. they certainly won't call for factory occupations or an "expropriating general strike"; their choice is between a fixed period and indefinite passive general walkout. A fixed period strike is just a demonstration since everyone knows from the start when it will end. Fraser and the ruling class would just sit it out. Furthermore it would have to be for a short period since otherwise too many workers would refuse to strike or drift back to work early, i.e. regard the demonstration as not worth the cost to them. An indefinite strike would be a much more serious matter, but still has the problem that Fraser and the ruling class are better situated for sitting it out. In addition it would expose the ACTU to almost certain failure. Think of what a defeat it would be for the union movement if the strike had to end because of the strikers melting away - as would have to happen eventually! If the strike lasted until the election there would either be a Fraser government with a

majority, and the union movement would be forced to capitulate, or a Whitlam government to whose election the general strike would or would not have contributed. Which? That is the question that Hawke has answered in the negative: according to him, and he may be right, an ACTU-called general strike would lose votes for the Labour Party.

To these fairly weighty reasons against calling for an ACTU-initiated general strike one must add some others. The first point is that for most workers a strike is a holiday during which the unions largely lose contact with them. To take an example: on Friday 14th 400,000 members of 30 unions struck in Victoria but even of the 20-30,000 who gathered at the meeting the stoppage was called to support, not all were unionists. The unions concerned would probably consider even this a good result. Another point is that even some militant workers (quite properly) resent the union leadership's tendency to call political strikes on their behalf. If the aim is to draw large numbers of workers into political agitation a general strike from above is not the way to do it.

On Tuesday 11th many workers would have accepted an immediate strike call; whether general, for their industry, for their city or even for their shop. Individual unions, ports, cities etc. did go on strike immediately and a mass demonstration formed in Melbourne in a few hours. This was a developing mass strike movement that Hawke decapitated. The movement could have been allowed to grow if Hawke had said nothing; he could have gained a phony reputation for radicalism - and had a nice pro-ALP demonstration - by calling a general strike for Wednesday 12th before people had cooled down: better still, a call for industrial action by the deposed government and no word from the ACTU immediately would have lead to a mass strike movement culminating in (i.e. being ended by) an official one day general strike on the Friday. None of these options would have raised the problems discussed above because they would be at the right psychological moment and would have been out of the way before the election campaign. They would have just appeared as an impressive, and spontaneous, anti-Fraser protest.

The chief merit of a mass strike movement as opposed to a controlled general strike is that it is political agitation rather than a mere demonstration. The involvement of the workers in an official general strike is largely passive: a handful of people discuss it beforehand and the rest then go fishing or, at best, go to listen to a speech they could have predicted beforehand. The generalisation of partial and local strikes, however, involves many more workers in decision-making and in argument pro and con, not only as the tactic, but also as the the issue involved. Each general meeting and, even more so, each stop-work meeting becomes part of a process of political education in which many more workers can take part than would ever attend a central rally called during a strike.

A general strike called from above merely measures the existing extent of militancy and radicalism: a strike movement extends it. Another point to remember about a mass strike movement is its unpredictability. It may die out or be ended by an official national general strike, but the ruling class does not know when- or whether - anything further will happen in the interim.

If the above arguments are accepted, then the strategy we demand should be one that maximizes the number of workers taking part in the discussion of action to be taken and one that puts off as long as possible the time when a national decision must be taken to terminate the movement. (It must be remembered that we are discussing strategies for radicalisation in a period that is still non-revolutionary). The ideal (whose unattainability one of course recognises) would be that each shop held stop-work meetings to formulate its own proposals, took action immediately where these proposals concerned only itself and held

discussions with delegates from other shops where they concerned others. This process would be continued by mass meetings of delegates from individual plants either meeting on a union or a geographical basis and so on. By developing dialogue in this way, from the bottom up - with each unit initiating action where it saw fit - both the aims above would be served. In general, therefore the proposals to be supported are those of stop-work meetings, formation of factory and regional action committees etc. As the current crisis recedes - if not transformed into an economic or military one by Fraser - these committees will fall apart but at least they will leave the legacy of inter-union and inter-party cooperation that is essential in the creation of a unified working class.

(The main lines of the analysis above are confirmed by the report from union leadership circles that part of the motivation for the Friday 14th partial general strike in Melbourne was to get the seamen and waterfront workers back to work. The unions that called it were also concerned that their members would take similar spontaneous action if not given an official demonstration strike).

(FAAB, Nov - Dec, 1975)

Persons who wish to offer papers and to participate in other ways should write to A.R. Giles-Peters, Revolution Area, School of Humanities, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria, 3083.

PART E: ANARCHISM AND EDUCATION

1. What Education should be about!

* That every inidividual should be able to exercise maximum autonomy in this technologically advanced, interdependent society.
* This means that each individual must have the widest amount of choice in the four major areas in which that individual lives out her/his life:

  (a) THE WORLD OF WORK:- the individual should be able to choose whatever career she/he wishes regardless of background or social position,

  (b) THE WORLD OF POLITICS:- the individual must be willing and able to make decisions on all matters which affect her/his life - which would mean expanding the channels available.

  (c) THE WORLD OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE:- the individual should be able to make a choice with respect to cultural identity and/or life-style -acknowledging difference as being legitimate,

  (d) THE WORLD OF INTER & INTRA-PERSONAL COMPETENCE:- the individual must be able to develop her/himself, be self-critical and see her/himself in a social context. The individual must be able to live harmoniously and cooperatively with other people and be aware of the dynamics involved in this.

This is what education should be about. The maximisation of options and choices available to the individual of course this can't happen without widespread social change. In fact a revolution of values and institutions would have to take place. But the school doing these things can facilitate the development of people who may be capable of being self-determining in all spheres.

* An individual cannot and will not survive in the modern world without some form of education. There are a large number of learnt skills that are essential for the individual in the development of a self-managed society. To make technology more directly linked to human needs will require technical knowledge which must be learnt.
* So then some much more justifiable institution (or whatever word you want to use) will still be necessary for the task of education.
* To do your own thing can mean to reinforce your own prejudices. In the face of the pressing issues of WAR, MINORITY SUPPRESSION, POVERTY and the ECOLOGICAL CRISIS this is not justifiable.

Where Education is at now

* It is obvious that what the schooling system that now operates is doing is streaming options, creating and maintaining hierarchies based on class, race, sex and ethnic lines; allocating positive and negative self-images along these lines; reinforcing competition, racism, sexism and authoritarian conditioning; doing all this by a method that is typical of other systems that are institutionally hierarchical and authoritarian. In short education serves the system by processing individuals for their role in the white, male, monocultural capitalist society. It is obviously a schooling system and has little to do with 'education'.

Actions that might be taken

* IF YOUR CAREER IS CONCERNED WITH EDUCATION AND YOU ARE AN ACTIVIST. Free schools seem to be in vogue and they mostly are a more human alternative, but they are a blatantly reformist and an only partial solution. Too many progressives teach in free schools, unable to cope with the pressures of mainstream education. Yes the system brutalises - where is the surprise!? As I see it working as a teacher in a Technical School my role is to put forward a constant dialogue for change to staff, students and administrators and to draw allies. This 'change' is to expand options, choices and decision-making roles along the lines already available. This work is to be done as well as working in other spheres propagating libertarian and anarchist ideas. Attempting as much as I can to implement my ideas in practice in whatever sphere I can. It is only through CONCRETE EXPERIENCE that attitudes can be influenced (especially in POWER RELATIONSHIPS).

* IF YOU ARE A STUDENT yours - as you are aware - is a powerless situation. You could organise to make yourself into a pressure group to look after your interests. Keep up a constant questioning of assumptions behind the education system - sending down of knowledge, power in the school, racism, sexism, ageism, and ethnic-based prejudice; organise against the inhumanities such as corporal punishment; skillfully draw allies from amongst staff but be aware that they may sell out.

* IF YOU ARE A PARENT you could take your child out of a state school because of the system's inhumanity. The young person's political education should grow out of her/his home-based experience (NOT wishing to moralise). Parents should be allies not protectors in young persons' political struggles. Many children have positive experiences out of struggle with the system. But there are casualties. As a parent you have a legitimate role in the decision-making process by which the school functions. You are not merely the 'supplier of the child'. Parent-Teacher organisations are usually powerless; try to participate and organise the parents to impress their views on the school while remaining aware of the legitimate voice of the student in the dialogue.

(FAAB, No.3, Jan-Feb, 1975)

2. Should Anarchists teach in traditional or free Schools?

I think the whole idea of compulsory schooling is wrong, either traditional or free (?). However, as the law of the land is geared for compulsory schooling, and the schools are there, I think anarchists should teach in both types of schools - in traditional schools as a humanitarian act - in free schools because it feels right, and as an example to the traditional schools to be more humane.

My objection to traditional schools is not only based on the either open or covert threat of violence (which is surely reason enough in itself), but also because of what happens to people there as a result of what is learned. Things that are learned at school are, among lots of others I've probably left out, -

1. Conformism
2. Crawling
3. Cowardice
4. Competition - and all that follows
5. Lack of confidence
6. Obedience to authority
7. Consumerism

These things are all learned through the atmosphere.

The general result of a state school education is a person with broken spirit and little, if any, initiative. Then, if University is added to this experience, a couple of other noticeable results are spitefulness and a generally jaded, if superior, air.

The argument that the repressive process will result in rebels is a bit thin. There are, of course, some rebellious souls coming out of state schools, but the majority are frightened poor crushed people, and this is achieved, sometimes, without a blow being struck.

Most jobs I've had over twenty years have not been marked by rebellion at unfair treatment. Most people are resigned, even if disgruntled, and all products of a repressive state school system. The only person who rebelled at any of my jobs was me. The idea of teaching in a State School with the aim of helping working class kids get a share of the good (interesting and financially rewarding) jobs is not really feasible (as well as not being a good thing anyway), because working class kids are culturally and financially disadvantaged from the start. There are <u>some</u> who "succeed", but surely the idea of competing with, not only the middle class, but also the <u>other working class kids</u>, doesn't help equalise things, it only enhances the meritocracy, and it is not good enough for <u>some</u> people to end up with the good jobs, even if they are working class - what about all the failures?

I don't think our aim should be for <u>some</u> working class kids to get a bigger slice of what the country has to offer at the expense of the also-rans, even if it is fairer for it to be shared between <u>some</u> middle class and <u>some</u> working class kids, instead of <u>only</u> middle class kids. We should aim for a society in which there are NO "GOOD JOBS".

State schools are there to provide an obedient work force. The 'successes" would be successful in fitting into the obedient work force, and becoming consumers. Traditional schools are not only not good = they are evil. They are one of the main instruments used to keep the status quo quoing.

My idea of an anarchist's aim is for everyone to be entitled to equal rights without having to compete. A person's worth being judged on educational results is wrong, wrong, wrong, If, for the "successes" to feel elated, the "failures" must be shattered, then its just not worth it, and this is what school is all about.

I don't think its immoral for an anarchist to teach in compulsory State schools, providing no one pretends its a good thing.

It's a similar situation to a gaol. A person entering a gaol as a warder with the object of not tyranising the inmates is performing a humane etc, but to pretend that gaols are worthwhile places is obviously not true. Schools are like gaols.

So until we have a situation where there's no compulsory schooling, I don't think teaching at free schools should be posed against teaching at traditional schools. Humanitarian acts can be performed at both.

<u>In Defence of Neill</u>

An argument I've heard used against Neill is that he was authoritarian, because he controlled his school single handed. A school can be authoritarian when run by a committee, and one person can be authoritarian or otherwise. He explained in "Sumerhill" that he opened his school under the circumstances he did because it was open that way or not at all.

Neill's main message (I think) was that freedom works. Children are cured of unhappiness (which contributes to anti-social behaviour) by freedom, accompanied by love and approval, and no amount of counselling was as successful as just plain freedom. For this alone, I think Neill deserves a little better than to be treated as "old hat". His contribution to children's happiness was enormous, and he has perhaps been underrated by many because he wrote so simply

In Defence of Ivan Illych

Ivan Illych's message seems to be too revolutionary for many people, and maybe a lot of what he says is missed because he writes in such a difficult style. Of course, I think he's terrific, because I agree with him, and anyone who agrees with me can't be all bad, and so I persevered with his writing style. He would like a society in which learning was not ritualised, and he is opposed to the idea of schools being the only places where learning takes place. He thinks "education capitalists" are an immoral sort of person to foster. So do I.

While I think Neill did so much for children who MUST go to school, I think Illych's ideas on education and society altogether are far ahead of Neill, but I don't see that they should be compared.

(FAAB, No.3, JAN-FEB,1975)

3. A Note on the Melbourne Discussion on De-Schooling

At the Latrobe Anarchists orientation week meeting the argument about de-schooling was brought up again and the clash between the two opposed positions formulated much more clearly than at the Dec.15th Victorian Regional Meeting or in the two (otherwise excellent) articles in the recent bulletin.

The opponents of de-schooling argue that the abolition of compulsory education in the current situation would further disadvantage the working class and such groups as migrants by increasing the cultural and educational gap between the middle and upper classes on the one hand and the working class and cultural minority groups on the other. Furthermore they argue that the important question is not whether children are free to attend or not to attend school but whether they have some control over their education when they are at school.

Thus they argue for concentration on fighting within the system to democratise it rather than fight for the right to withdraw from it.

The supporters of de-schooling argue that in fact the gap between the educationally favoured and disadvantaged is already as great as it would be with non-compulsory schooling. They also argue that in fact parental pressure would continue to make working class children attend school. (If true this refutes an argument above but hardly fits the de-schoolers' position either). The core de-schooling position (cf. RT's article in the recent FAAB) is that the damage done by the current authoritarian educational set-up to children is so serious that they should have the chance to opt out regardless of other possible long-term consequences. This position also points to the anti-libertarian and anti-socialist values learned through the school atmosphere and counterposes to the concern with the working class mobility apparently involved in the opposing position the consideration that mobility means the draining of the working class of its

active elements without changing the general hierarchical organisation of society.

I hope this rather brief summary brings out the strengths of the two positions, strengths that I think justify attempting to find a synthesis between them which will provide guidance to both anarchist teachers and parents and also link short-term activities to long-term aims.

In part a clue to an agreed programme was provided by the person who raised the question at Latrobe. He suggested that one required open access to educational facilities. Since de-schooling would be near to meaningless without open access this suggests that the immediate aim of de-schoolers should be open access to educational facilities. The non-de-schoolers are hardly opposed to this; they only wish to stress that access should not only be to books and buildings but also to power and decision-making structures.

All Anarchists will be agreed on the necessity of libertarian educational structures and the right of access to them of all persons; the only question is that of whether our first priority is to press for non-compulsion or to press for the institutions to replace it and make it unnecessary. Politically we must realize that what we press for and what we get are two different things. The problem is not that of de-schooling versus non-de-schooling but rather that of working out the changes we can make in particular institutions and of working out whether we ourselves can expand the range of options.

(VRAB, No.1 March-April, 1975)

4. Education and Class

In the last 100 years schools (and education) have undergone some obvious changes. These changes may seem superficially desirable - some modern buildings, air-conditioned classrooms, the latest in audio-visual equipment for some and of course compulsory attendance for all. But has SCHOOL really changed. A closer look reveals that schools are basically AUTHORITARIAN - power rests in the hands of a few individuals.

Australian schools are based on the British model. The British Schools were set up by the ruling classes in the ninteenth century to deal with certain problems which had then arisen. Industrialization had just started in the cities. The farm labourers who came to fill the jobs didn't have the skills to cope with their new work situations or city living. The middle class saw these people as being 'ignorant' and'uncivilized' and lacking in virtues which they considered necessary - ambition, love of money, submission to authority, competition and respect for law and order. The capitalists wanted the labour force to be able to read so that they could cope with simple written signs on machines in their workplace.

Like the rest of our society, schooling is ruled by institutions. The people who are affected by that institution (parents and students) are not given any voice in how that institution should be run. The institution controls those people's lives irregardless of their wishes. This is WRONG!! PEOPLE, BEING EQUAL, have as an inalienable right, the right to SELF DETERMINATION. People can only develop to their fullest potential, when they exercise their voice (or choice) in the decision-making processes that affect them. For example the Housing Commission decides a hell of a lot about where people live without those people having any direct say in the decision. After all, who would CHOOSE to

exist in the cramped dehumanizing atmosphere of a high-rise flat? Working class people are powerless in the face of these institutions. That is not to say we can't do anything, it just means we are given no officially recognised voice.

The school had adopted the aims and values of the people who set it up - the middle class. Later when the middle class went into schooling they didn't have any trouble - their aims and values were the same as the school's. But the school acts as a FORTRESS to working class people, it has been that way since the beginning. The students are LOCKED OUT. Working class, migrant and racially different students come into conflict with the middle class nature of the school. The children of our society are SCHOOLED, but not EDUCATED. They are forced to learn only middle class values and ideas.

Education involves the search for truth by being encouraged to think clearly and critically - to realise basic truths about self and society. Schooling on the other hand involves forcing students to stay at school to learn an ALREADY ACCEPTED BODY OF KNOWLEDGE, and because this body of knowledge is put together by the middle class it has their values subtly hidden all through it.

The students are being taught under AUTHORITARIAN conditions - teacher is BOSS. Students are not developing the ability to DETERMINE THEIR OWN FUTURE. We are told what to do and what is right. We are being taught how to be passive lackies of the bosses, (both in government and industry). We are not being given the ability to see beyond the fact that we feel bad. If we get out of line and rebel against this, even in an unknowing way (truancy, fights at school, refusing to learn, hating school) we become the meat in the sandwich. Heads - they win, tails - we lose!

At the same time, the parents and the community are locked OUT. The working class parents are seen by the school as being the supplier of the student, nothing else. The abilities and interests fof both the parents and the students are being ignored, we are simply the supplier and the product. Working class are locked out by rules set up by the AUTHORITARIAN administration, who like all people in that position have an idea that they are SUPERIOR to everyone else (in this case based on what they think is superior intelligence). Working class parents 'lack' the middle class ways of speaking and dressing so the authoritarians in power think these people don't really know what's best for their kids. Middle class people still believe the urban 'poor' are generally lazy and could do well if only they tried. This is a FALSITY, we NEED the skills that the middle class hold a monopoly on.

For Black Australians and migrants in Australia this issue is further complicated by the fact that the FORTRESS recognises only one legitimate culture. It doesn't provide for different ways of doing things, different manners, languages and personal styles.

AS a parent or student:

* With where the world is today it is not wise to not go to school - everyone needs good jobs - why should the middle class get all the good jobs? Why should WE cut our OWN necks.

* Have pride in our cultural wealth whether working class, migrant or black. Schools will try to deny the student this by all kinds of means.

* Talk to other parents and students about this. You have a legitimate right to your say. It's our life not theirs.

* The school (and the society) will only change with a unified aware opposition.

(ACRACIA, No.90, 1975)

5. Basil Bernstein's Theory

Exposition

* There has been a failure to think through the relationship between the pupil's background and the educational measures appropriate to successful learning.

* Size of classes may not be as important as the pupils background.

* Different social groups seem to differ more in their ability with words than in intelligence.

* A pupil can't succeed at school unless his English is good.

* Lower working class children have difficulty learning to read and in extending their vocabulary, and they will think in concrete terms rather than abstract. They may learn mechanical processes but will have difficulty understanding abstract processes.

* Control of classes is necessarily a problem that follows from this.

* These pupils have a 'restricted code' linguistically. The code also strengthens group cohesiveness.

* Middle class children possess an 'elaborated code'. This allows individual social conditioning. "...the outside gets into the inside from the very beginning of speech".

* An elaborated code allows social power to be disguised and revealed under neutral circumstances. It also allows the existence of feelings of guilt (which can be manipulated) while restricted codes allow only the feeling of shame, which cannot.

* To successfully educate lower working class pupils it is necessary to have smaller class sizes so the greater teacher/pupil contact will speed the development of an elaborated code.

Criticism 1

Libertarians involved in education began to attack Basil Bernstein only last year. Why had his theory of 'elaborated' and restricted language codes (the working class having only a restricted code) so rapidly been accepted, and widely transmitted, in educational circles? They suggested that while the theory had the appearance of concern for the disadvantages of working class children, in fact it justified the dominance of middle class norms by making them seem objectively - conceptually - superior, and thus legitimizing the failure of working class children within the education system. This was very convenient for the system, appearing at just about the period when the validity of the previous instrument of class division in education, the I.Q. test was beginning to crumble.

Basing himself on examples which were often hypothetical, Bernstein portrayed working class language as intrinsically limited and middle class language as intrinsically capable of more complex concepts and therefore a more effective negotiation of the world. But did the two ideal types implied in this theory correspond to reality? Bernstein's image of middle class language was only the language of some academics and intellectuals, while his image of working class language neglected the highly elaborate forms developed in all sorts of autonomous working class contexts, including institutions such as trade unions, or in regional dialects and cultures.

As to the virtues of middle class language, were these not also, in some respects, an impediment to effective thought rather than its only adequate vehicle? Bernstein's hypothetical middle class person could revert to a restricted code

when necessary, but in reality a high degree of fluency presented as many additional opportunities to confuse, mislead and disguise thought as to clarify and extend it; and those trained to fluency were sometimes unable to find their way back to simplicity or to realize when they were actually saying nothing or saying contradictory things.

Another assumption to avoid is that the language code of teachers in the class room is necessarily elaborate even if the 'elaborate code' theory does hold good for teachers, as middle class people, in ordinary life. It is likely that many teachers practise - and impose - a more restricted code in the class room than they use in personal life.

It is still difficult at this time to evaluate just how vulnerable Bernstein's theory is on all these points... he keeps revising. However, we now have positions for debate, and it is vital that this debate should be joined, since Bernstein's work is tentative and difficult to understand, and yet as already almost mandatory in education courses.

In one sense this matters little - few ed. theory courses have much relationship to what really happens in school anyway. But there is a danger that theories which are purveyed by lecturers because they appear to help prepare students to redress working class disadvantages in the class room actually do precisely the opposite by engendering firm teacher expectations of working class failure. Ultimately, no amount of theorising will convince your socially-anxious, establishment - respecting middle class teacher that working class pupils are not intellectually inferior. It is not until teachers think of themselves as working class that they will be able to teach working class pupils without subconsciously trying to disqualify and undermine the autonomous thought of those pupils.

Criticism 2.

Bernstein's essay attempts to come to grips with the educational problems of working class pupils. He argues that the underlying difficulty is that these students speak and think with what he calls a restricted linguistic code. This 'restricted code' is characterized by a small vocabulary, simple grammar with broken sentences, and an inability to hold a formal subject through a speech sequence. He opposes to this 'restricted code' an 'elaborated code', used by middle class pupils. My own concern however centres not on the teaching of working class kids, but with the role of teachers... and implicit in Bernstein's theory is an ideology for teachers that has sobering social consequences.

Bernstein prefers not to talk of the working class, but uses the 'operational' grouping defined by those who use the 'restricted code'. He asserts that the two are similar but that it is more accurate (in the teaching context) to use the division between the 'restricted code'/'elaborated code' users over the working class/middle class division. His is fair enough but it abstracts education from its social environment and consequences into an academic objectivity which enables Bernstein to come close to more basic problems but seemingly not to recognise them and to pass them by. Only through this type of 'objectivity' can you totally ignore the meaning of class in a capitalist society.

Language and Learning

The essay is about language and learning and it turns on the connection between language and experience in the learning process. Bernstein is prepared, for a start, to allow that a restricted code can convey more information to someone who is familiar with it than its literal meaning that it can carry complexities

of meaning which would gravely mislead an outsider ignorant of its nuances and using only the usual meanings of the words. However he argues that it is not sufficient to fill the needs of secondary education-it allows neither the understanding of processes behind a topic (e.g. in arithmetic) nor conceptualization generally. This brings us back to experience as a part of learning. Does, in fact, the limitations of a restricted code prevent its possessor from analysing complex experiences? Obviously, there is no verbal way of testing this, as the subject does not have the accepted vocabulary, or the grammar, to express his analyses, but it may well appear in the practical exacution of a task-the concrete area of activity. Here Bernstein is decidedly ambiguous as although he largely ignores it he does say enough to show that he is aware of its educational possibilities. Just the same, there is no special virtue in either method of analysis-the concrete or the verbal-over the other. Both are capable of supporting the traditional teacher role (or the increasingly popular extendedrole) as the number and success of the 'free schools' show. Bernsteins willingness to concentrate on linguistic poverty becomes more than merely eccentric when he moves on to discuss the other function of education - discipline.

Discipline

Discipline, class control, interest in the teacher and teacher involvement are all linked by Bernstein through the linguistic 'wealth of an elaborated code'. When he describes the consequences of a restricted code for the individual the learning aspects (...low level of conceptualization...','...lack of interest in processes...') are jumbled with an implicit theory of delinquency and disruptionism on the one hand with social parochialism on the other. Bernstein discusses the disciplinary aspects of an elaborated code in terms first of the use of rationality as a buffer to disguise social force and secondly as necessary to the establishing feelings of guilt. An elaborated code is an accepted goal of the education process - it is simply an extended vocabulary with accurate grammatical and logical functions. Quite clearly, if the seemingly altruistic goal of teaching good English can serve such a function then the social role of the teacher is in question. Bernstein argues that the manipulation of guilt is a more effective form of control than corporal punishment. To maximise this manipulation it follows that personal contact between working class pupils and teachers should be increased so as to elicit these feelings of guilt and to make them more readily usab-le-an interesting sidelight on the agitation for smaller classes. Further, an elaborated code allows an individual to be used by society as a means to a further end rather than simply as an end in himself. In summary then, the power of social control and social use is greatly increased if the object of that control possesses an elaborated linguistic code.

Teachers Role

I began by saying that my own concern was with the teacher rather than with the pupil. The purpose of a teacher, as proposed by Bernstein, and as has become accepted by educational reformers, is to serve as a social unifying agent, one who removes the barriers within society. To accomplish this the teacher no longer stands in front of a class and writes on the black-board or talks for 50 minutes...he becomes an active agent in the personal lives of his pupils. It does not matter whether the 'subject' he 'teaches' is a formal course in a state school or supervision of 'free' children in a 'free'school - his major role is the breaking down of walls. These walls are the barriers to control the use. Within the middle class breaking them down is relatively easy - for one thing its members already use an elaborated code and hence Bernstein allows larger class size for middle class than for working class pupils. However, in the lower working class the 'restricted code' helps to keep the teacher OUTSIDE. It

has to be replaced or circumvented and, to acheive similar and results to Bernstein the Karmel Report advocated a purely practical course of education, with no conceptual work whatsoever.

REFORMS It remains to look at the reforming wave in the "teaching" profession. The old regime of education worked on the assumption that academic failure was due to a failure in the individual pupil, owing either to a lack of ability or a lack of application. The newer opinion ascribes failure to a lack of teacher/pupil contact and the solution it offers is to increase contact through smaller classes. Both the attitude and solution reflect a new professionalism among teachers. Basically, this entails the view that teachers are capable of solving the problems of the education process because they are experts. The professional attitudes do not only apply to the learning side of education but to the disciplinary side as well. The same solution of greater contact between teacher and pupil is proposed by Bernstein with the teacher using the HANDLE provided by guilt feelings (originally implanted by the learning of an elaborated code... in practise the use of one would presumably help along the development of the other) to manipulate the behaviour of the pupil. Needless to say while the old system (with its belief that the pupil stood or fell on his own talents and behaviour) was run independently of the values of the teacher, the newer one is closely tied to these values. Here however, the growth of professionalism is important. This does not seem to have been challenged by the Education Department so presumably they rightly, see no threat in it. In fact as it gains ground we can see that left wing attitudes will become rarer in the 'profession' and the manipulation of students will increasingly be in accordance with the needs of the capitalist society.

In summary, then teaching seems to be in a prime position, through its professionalism and its virtual monopoly in education - learning and discipline, both within the class and within society - to facilitate the sort of humane corporate state that capitalism, at least in Australia, seems to be pointing towards. The problem that confronts the libertarian teacher is to fulfill the learning aspect of teaching without strengthening the educational institution or expanding its control over pupils.

(ACRACIA, No. 49, 1975)

PART F: ANARCHISM AND FEMINISM

1. Feminism and Anarchism

The feminism and socialism conference held in Melbourne, October 5th-6th this year, marked the clear need among women both in the traditional left wing groups and in the womens' movement to come together to discuss wider political issues than those which feminism has in the last 10 years become synonymous with:- i.e.: free abortion on demand, equal pay, free adequate child care facilities etc. etc. The object of the conference, and to a certain extent it succeeded, was to go beyond these issues to analysis of women within capitalism, and feminism as a revolutionary force. Because no such conference had been held before, it was obvious to all that although there would be consensus on those above basic issues, there was likely to be a wide diversity of political analysis above and beyond them.

This proved to be the case. There was much discussion over the class question, whether the traditional marxian analysis can be applied to women, or whether women merely assume the class of their husband, both parties were disappointingly intransigent on this issue; the traditional trot-ML groups refused to admit all women share any common oppression, or any that goes beyond the economic factors that oppress both working men and women, and many militant feminists refused to condemn bourgeois women for their willing participation in the exploitation of workers. It is obvious that women are oppressed in different ways, and to overide economic oppression and say all women are sexually oppressed is insufficient as it overlooks the plight of working-class women, and to look at the issue of women in class terms is overlooking the crucial nature of feminism in its challenge to sex roles. To say that a bourgeois woman is not economically oppressed by hard working conditions, two jobs, too many children, etc., does not eliminate the fact that she may and probably is limited by society because she is a woman, and one must look at how she uses her position in the capitalist class before feminists can open their arms to her as their 'sister'.

A distressing feature of the conference was that although there were large numbers of women who were active militants, in the larger political sense, they have been forced in a way to move towards Trotskyist groups in order to find a venue for their political activity. Thus they have fallen victim to both a narrow analysis of the role of feminism in revolution, and an authoritarian analysis of society and revolution as a whole. It is paradoxical that feminism, a real challenge to authoritarian role conditioning and power relations, should be seen, to a lot of women, in a revolutionary situation as an auxiliary wing of the Leninist political party.

This is due to the limitations of the feminist movement as it is presently organized. The introverted realizations of the impact of one's own role conditioning in the way one relates to other people is crucial to feminism, in fact a lot more people should attempt it, but it is not all. Feminism as a revolutionary movement needs to extend beyond this introspective approach and couple it with an outgoing analysis of capitalism, because although women have been oppressed for thousands of years it is through capitalism that we are oppressed today.

The fact that the majority of feminist groups have not extended beyond consciousness-raising between its own members, to wider political activity is the reason why many women have been forced to move towards Leninist groups. The other alternative and unfortunately the most common among feminists is political apathy. Due to the immaturity of feminism as an ideology (I say maturity in a historical sense) the reconciliation of immediate and long term aims has never been sufficiently

achieved for the movement as a whole, consequently women have floated to find their own means of reconciling the two and the result, unfortunately, is frequently not consistent with the fundamental premise of feminism i.e.: a questioning of role conditioning, patriarchy and authoritarianism.

A libertarian ideology is the only one capable of embracing a feminist world view, in that, for the anarchist there can never be any arbitrarily imposed priority for economic/political causes as against social issues that touch the individual, all is one. Anarchism is incompatible with personal tyranny, which it correctly sees as the most fundamental and insidious form of tyranny

Consequently anarchy, must utilize its lack of restricting dogma to embrace the 'low-key' political activities i.e.: Feminism, role conditioning, anti-psychiatry, Reich, environment, it goes on. But primarily I don't mean anarchism should embrace these fields on an issue basis, that must never be the level of our politics; what I feel we must do is freely approach these areas to develop our own consciousness as anarchists. No-one would deny that they are encased in a capitalist repressive environment and the effects of that on the individual must be fruitfully explored. Before the individual can attempt to change society they must perceive first the limitations society has already imposed upon them, and act upon that as they act upon society.

(Read to the Victorian Pre-Conference Dec.1974. Distributed at National Conference. January, 1975).

2. What Anarchism can learn from Feminism and Feminism <u>might</u> learn from Anarchism.

If one takes the aim of anarchism as being that of achieving social freedom - a state in which no person(s) dominate(s) or oppress any other - than feminism is plainly relevant to anarchism. Indeed from such a viewpoint feminism would be part of anarchism: that part of the theory and practice of anarchism that analyses the causes and conditions of sexist oppression in theory in order to overthrow them in practice. That this logical relationship of feminism to anarchism does not correspond to their current or historical relationship hence needs an explanation.

Whilst a cursory glance through anarchist history suggests that anarchism probably has less on its conscience in this regard than marxist and other socialist movements one could hardly say that the problem of sexual repression has attracted anything like the attention that the problems of economic or political oppression have. Bakunin declared for complete social, economic and political equality of the sexes based on the abolition of civil and religious marriage, the juridicial family and the personal inheritable property on which it is based. However whilst progressive for its time Bakunin's formulation was adequate neither theoretically nor programmatically. At the time there was little that could be said about control of one's own body - contraception and abortion - although this issue was taken up by Emma Goldman this century. More seriously Bakunin did not tackle the problem of internalised oppression (or oppressiveness) and hence gave only a legal and economic (later also medical) account of the conditions of womens' liberation. For this reason it was possible for the practices and attitudes of oppression to continue within anarchism together with an ideology-political committment to liberation.

It is also true that anarchists - as have socialists and feminists - have often been guilty of taking a certain sort of oppression as fundamental and of identifying the achievement of the conditions of certain freedoms with the

achievement of those freedoms themselves. In the case of the anarchist movement this reductionism has sometimes taken the marxist-economist position of reducing everything to the change in the relations of production but it has also taken the form of regarding "the revolution" as a once-and-for-all event in which everything is made anew overnight and individuals smash all their social, political, economic, cultural, intellectual and psychological chains at once. More usually however anarchist reductionists have regarded everything as following from the suppression of "the state". Between marxists who have reduced the problem of freedom to that of a change in the relations of production; feminists who have reduced it to the abolition of sex oppression; and anarchists who have reduced everything to the problem of authority there can be little useful communication.

The most important thing feminism can learn from the anarchist movement is the necessity of avoiding the error of reductionism. If one regards the central thing in recorded history as being the fact that societies have been divided into order givers and order takers - or that they have exhibited a dominance of males over females - then one discovers that <u>in terms of this principle alone</u> there is nothing specific that one can say about any society. The differences recede into the background and all societies become variations on the same theme. History itself ceases to exist. From a religious viewpoint this would not matter but from a revolutionary viewpoint - feminist or anarchist - it does. If one cannot within one's theory distinguish between modern society and previous societies then one cannot discuss the question as to whether the existing society contains forces which might lead toward change in the direction one desires; at least one cannot discuss this question without smuggling in a completely different set of categories.

If the reductionist temptations were overcome then the immediate objective of feminism would be to analyse <u>modern</u> society in order to discover the conditions for the overthrow of sexist oppression and the immediate objective of anarchism would be to do the same in order to overthrow the state. On this basis it would appear that there was no relation between the two movements but this appearance would be only because we were ignoring the fact that for anarchism the destruction of the state is only important as a <u>means</u> to social freedom. Social freedom itself depends on much more than the abolition of the state. It depends amongst other things on the creation or appropriation of such a hypothesised non-reductionist feminism.

I say "hypothesised" since it does not seem that either feminism or anarchism has yet succeeded in elaborating a theory adequate to its tasks (I assume of course that this can be done). Despite this I believe that there has already been and is possible in the future a fruitful interchange at the level of political and interpersonal practice. Historically anarchism buttressed its attack on the state by an attack on the legitimations of authority. This attack on political authority and authoritarianism was not only directed outwards but had important effects on political and personal relationships within the movement itself. This is an aspect of anarchism which has been largely adopted by the women's movement - as has its movement as opposed to party structure - because the exercise of political authority and the special leadership figure seemed in some sense to be part of the social values associated with "masculinity" and patriarchalism, (history after all is the history of male leaders. Look at the ordinary treatment of women leaders for the exception proving the rule). However this tendency was deepened by the analysis of "sexual authoritarianism" in a way that had not been done in the anarchist movement. In this improved form it is time for the anarchist movement to reappropriate it. Since we are all believers in equal decision-making power it is time to analyse and break down the mechanisms

preventing all people from participating equally. It should be mentioned here that in the process of refining the anarchist practice the women's movement brought into focus several things which had been skimmed over earlier but were by no means connected with sex oppression. Not of course that the women's movement lives up to its (anarchist) ideal. It can be just as canine (the neuter form of what sexists used to call 'bitchy') as any left-wing movement but at least it has formulated practical steps towards ideal internal communication.

In conclusion then anarchism and feminism have something to learn from each other but there are also some things they could learn together. Even apart from the fact that anarchism logically presupposes feminism, feminism is closer to anarchism that to any other left-wing position. They are united in their insistence that the forms of interpersonal relations desired for the future society will only be achieved by striving to produce them now in the existing radical or revolutionary movement. Like the old Industrial Workers of the World they both attempt to start building the new society within the shell of the old.

(FAAB, Sept-Oct. 1975)

3. Theses Against Separatism

1. Because anarchism aims at human equality we oppose any doctrines attributing special virtues to one sex or the other on mystical biological grounds (just as we oppose attributing special virtues to a particular race). Our objections are both moral, political and scientific. If one group of people starts thinking that in some mysterious and ineffable way they are superior to another group then they will soon start showing this in actions; the more so the original claim has no discoverable factual content. This way lies the irrational mythologies of master races; the Volk and its special relation to blood and soil. Scientifically we object because differences in biological function are just that; they are not differences in ultimate worth, closeness to nature or anything else. Within history they may have led to differences in economic, social and political status, to particular structures of sexual oppression and to sexually differentiated codes of value. All this however remains a process of empirical history lacking any transcendental significance the fact that this structure of oppression contradicts our current values is like the oppression and values themselves an historical product. Insofar as an ideology is appearing which asserts a female superiority which is neither one of physical strength nor of intellectual ability (the so-called "male" values) this can only be understood as a continuation in a new context of the value systems of female oppression; an assertion of "femaleness" as valuable which, whilst a first step in liberation, ultimately leads back to woman's traditional role unless the fantasies of a completely separate female world can be realised - fantasies which are themselves only the old idea of a separate women's sphere projected onto the whole world.

2. The degree to which this idea of the female as a special principle simply reproduces the old ideologies with the plus and minus signs reversed can be seen in the idea of there being separate male and female anarchism. Whilst it is natural that feminists in the women's movement will initially find some aspects of anarchism more relevant than other to their immediate situation and interests we must oppose the attempt to inflate this into a distinction between two types of anarchism: a women's anarchism treating personal relations and the family and a men's anarchism treating class relations and politics. Such a division merely reproduces the old theory of the division of labour between the sexes: woman for the home and personal life, man for the state and civil society, social and political life. It also negates the very thing that originally attracted women in the movement towards anarchism: the theory of non-hierarchical organisation around affinity groups, a theory which has the function of tying together the two spheres.

3. This raises the question of the function of women's groups within the anarchist movement. From an anarchist standpoint there can be no objection to groups of people coming together to discuss and act on the issues that concern them· self-activity is both a means and an end for anarchism. Also no anarchist could presume to determine the membership of other people's affinity groups. There is no need for women's anarchist groups to justify their existence as women's groups by a conscious and deliberate restriction of their activities to so-called "women's issues". Even apart from personal preferences there may be excellent reason for forming women's groups within the anarchist movement whose focus of activity is quite unrestricted. These reasons might either be anarchist, e.g. the maximisation of independent centres of activity, or feminist, e.g. the organisation of opposition to de facto male dominance or the attack on internalised structures of oppression carried over from outside society. Indeed insofar as one's concern is to overcome sexual role differentiation within the anarchist movement and then society at large it seems quite necessary to avoid the restriction of women's groups to "women's issues' <u>unless</u> it can be proven that in all other anarchist groups women participate equally and fully.

4. It would be mistaken however to deduce from this that there is something wrong in a feminist focus for the activity of a women's anarchist group. The main focus of activity of an anarchist group should arise from a consideration of the various opportunities open, the means available and the desires and interests of its members. There would be something very wrong with a women's anarchist group which did not adopt a feminist focus; from a global viewpoint it would be a misallocation of anarchist resources. One must sharply reject the view that feminist activities are inferior or less important than activities directed towards, say, the working class. One must also reject the idea that these are necessarily distinct activities. The existence of the women's movement and its reflection in popular consciousness have created avenues of approach to people which were not available previously. Anarchist women can approach women because they are women; anarchist men are just mere anarchists. As a result the avenues for all sorts of anarchist activities are widened provided that women anarchists do not restrict themselves purely to women's anarchism.

(Originally written for Anarcho-Feminist Conference but not presented).

(VRAB, No.4, Jan - Feb.1976)

PART G: ANARCHISM AND THE TRADE UNIONS

1. The Anarchist Attitude to Trade Union Officials: Introduction.

A limitation of nearly all left wing vanguardist agitation is that it presumes to tell people what is the case about their lives from deduction of what must be the case from sacred texts. Thus the mere empirical details of people's lives are sacrificed to the abstractions of political ideologies.

The anarchist movement has tried to get away from this by pushing a self-management line; that it is best to do your revolutionary work in the area where you are and react to the forces oppressing you (and others in like situations) directly. A desirable result expect from this is that the line evolved in this way will more exactly reflect the contours of the real situation. It will be better as agitation/propaganda and it will not lend itself to a new form of oppression by the ideologically most knowledgeable (if I am allowed such a paradox).

Despite this direct involvement is not a guarantee of knowledge; people have always lived their lives falsely and observed their own activity through ideologically-tinted glasses. The fact that one may see things through a different ideology from the dominant one is no guarantee of rectitude - let alone theoretical comprehensiveness. To achieve the latter it is also necessary to 'bracket' one's experience and interpretations of it, to stand back and consider the matter from other angles. The way to do this is by talking to people of different backgrounds of experiences - but remember that they have limitations too - and by studying scientific and theoretical writings on the subject, confronting them both with experience and with one another.

The relevance of the above preamble to my topic is this: the phrases, 'trade union' bureaucracy' and 'trade union bureaucrat' are now common property of the various left sects and have been emptied of any meaning at all. They are used in leaflets distributed at factory gates by groups without the time, inclination or contracts necessary for giving a concrete description of the situation in specific unions, or in particular plants. As a result, they don't say anything, they just express a generally negative attitude to which workers generally react unfavorably. (After all union-bashing and union official-bashing is indulged in all the time in the mass media and by the government.)

Phrases such as these are not necessary if we are just trying to give workers - who may well include ourselves - a new understanding of their situation. For this purpose a description of the actual situation is a thousand times more useful for, as I have suggested above and shall argue below, 'trade union bureaucracy' is a phrase masquerading as a scientific or descriptive concept. What such phrases are used for - and the same goes for ones like 'proletarian' - is for teaching the workers a new party language; for the manipulation of their attitudes and activities by various leaders, propagandists and demagogues.

The reason that I say that such phrases do not represent concepts is that they tell you surprising little about the actual organisation and structure of trade unions or about the aims and attitudes of trade union officials. 'Bureaucracy' once had a fairly precise sense within social and political science but since becoming a term of popular abuse it has lost any useful meaning. (In Weber's original typology it had if anything positive associations.) For that reasons, I suggest that we study trade union organisations before criticising them. Contrary to the impression given by the blanket term "bureaucracy" trade unions differ considerably in their structure and organisation, leadership practices and accessibility to movements from below. They differ in the degree to which anarchists can work within them and change them.

Whilst the science of organisations has dealt extensively with public administration and the organisation of the firm or enterprise, surprisingly little has been written on trade union organisation and leadership. The various different types of management structure have been analysed according to success or failure in different organisational environments and by the type of technology with which they are typically associated, but little study has been done of trade union structure by type of industry or worker. Despite this, it is obviously a fertile field; different unions have different functions and function in different environments. To take an obvious example, the emergence of the shop steward and shop committee in England in the metal trades was a response to the type of work done by metal workers and its considerable extension was a result of the extra pressures of the First World War.

To get back now to my starting point, I suggest that comrades read whatever they can on trade unions, their leadership and structure, and also read the document appended here written by RT which gives us the benefit of her experiences and the conclusions she has reached on their basis. I have also appended a brief reading list which I hope other comrades will be able to add to.

(FAAB No. 4, March/April, 1975.)

2. Some Views on Trade Union Officials and Their Work Styles: RT

From my observation over 20 years (on and off) of working trade union offices in Sydney and Melbourne, I have come to have a certain view of trade union officials, the most obvious is that THEY ARE NOT ALL ALIKE.

There are hard working Trade Union Officials, and there are unhard working Trade Union Officials. There are (and these are in the majority, I think) hard working and sincere types, but who are (in my opinion) on the wrong track. These people ascribe to the "Follow Me" style of work, whereas I think they should be of the "What do you think? I think..... however, its up to you" school.

A frequent complaint levelled at Trade Union Officials is that they don't give sufficient "leadership". This means, generally, not being bossy enough and telling the members what to do. This complaint comes from the members themselves, as well as from well-meaning observers. People are used to being directed, and even want their own representatives to tell them what to do.

This doesn't develop people as humans and it turns the Trade Union Officials into bosses.

Many Officials resist this style of work, but almost invariably they are forced into the position of "leadership".

I think it is unfair to lump all Officials together (as some do) and while some of their number do enjoy the role of "Glorious Leader", many of them don't, and only resort to this type of behaviour in desperation. In short, they shouldn't ALL be blamed for the general trade union scene. They are all victims of our school system and the whole cultural climate

People wanting to assist the trade union movement should tactfully point out alternative forms of work. The idea is to convince them, not abuse them.

Its a bit galling too, for Officials who have worked long hours, and with the best of intentions, to be told what to do by a lot of office workers, and (wait for it) students (even if they are right and have noble intentions).

Many Trade Union Officials have a lot of trouble at home because of the nature of their work taking them away from home so much, then quite often they are told off by irate workers because they haven't shown sufficient "leadership", and finally to be told the "error of their ways" by outside-the-industry people most almost be the last straw.

I think many people attribute motives to others that are unfair, and in some cases, just plain wrong. I've done this myself, and I've tried to tell trade union officials how they should do their job too, so I feel entitled to pass on the "error of my ways" to others now that I've realised how complex people are, and the more I have to do with trade unionists, the more I lean towards the "I think" style, as opposed to "it is so" type talk.

The smart-arse, insulting method of passing criticisms on should be avoided at all costs, and it helps to bear in mind that all trade union officials are not alike. They all however have a lot of pressures on them to perform in the old style, and many members display a sickening degree of deference to officials which is sometimes not discouraged by some less 'aware' officials. I say they are unaware in the same way they are unaware that they are male chauvinists (some of them are male chauvinists in the sweetest manner, and would be appalled if they were thought of as such). The same pressures are on them to show "leadership", and they would be less than human if they didn't occasionally (if not entirely) succumb to the pressures.

I think a trade union official's duty should be to encourage members to have faith in themselves as humans, and to do their own thinking, and not to be pushed around by anyone, either bosses or shop stewards, or officials. It aint dignified!

(FAAB, March/April, 1975.)

3. Some's More Equal Than Others (or are they?)

Someone said to me, the other day, "Do you really think a doctor should be paid the same rate as a street sweeper?" I don't know about you, but MY hackles were up immediately. I don't think anyone is WORTH more than another. I don't think anyone NEEDS more than another.

Money is for keeping body and soul together, for such items as food, shelter, clothing, etc., and when it comes to luxuries, I definitely do not think anyone should have more than anyone else.

"What about incentives for people to study for 'higher' education?" I don't think any further incentive than the actual study itself should be offered. I don't think anyone should be rewarded FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES for undertaking studies. I don't think anyone should be penalised ALSO FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES for not undertaking studies.

"Alright then, what about people being compensated for the disadvantage they suffered whilst undergoing these studies?" This argument can be overcome with a technicality. If people undergoing studies were paid a full wage while studying, they would not be disadvantaged (its only a temporary disadvantage anyway, and the present compensations are permanent). If they felt the time spent in studying disadvantaged them, then they would not be people who enjoyed studying.

This brings us to people's motives for undertaking the beastly studies. There are a few motives that I can think of -

1. A genuine interest in the subject.

2. Altruism (to enable them to help others when the studies are completed).

3. Status.

4. Later Financial rewards.

If the equal pay idea is in practice, (3) and (4) can be eliminated, which leaves only people with genuine interests and those who want to use the studies to help others. These two categories would not need monetary incentives, would they?

Then, there are all the people who don't have a special interest in studying, or who are unable to meet the intellectual requirements of the courses offered. Should they be penalised with lower wages because of lack of interest or ability - for the REST OF THEIR LIVES, remember!

People who are interested in their jobs are very lucky. Ask all the bored process workers, office workers, etc. I think you'd find that "interest in your job" was worth a few bob to them, and in fact, some people can't even comprehend a situation where a job could be found interesting.

The problem of people with dependents could be overcome by a PROPER child endowment or dependents scheme. Mothers or fathers who stayed at home to mind the children could be paid the same equal hourly rate as everyone else.

If everyone were paid the same hourly rate, workers, students, apprentices, mothers or fathers at home minding children, aged or invalid dependents (with the appropriate and fair adjustments for such dependents), the TEMPORARY disadvantage of being a student or apprentice would be overcome. An hour of anyone's time is no less valuable to a person than an hour of anyone else's.

My arguments for equal hourly rates for all are moral arguments, but difficulties of getting around the "disadvantage" problems can be dealt with technically, and can be eliminated quite simply. These arguments are thrown ~~up, I believe~~, because there are no moral arguments against the proposition.

Almost everyone believes that all children should have equal opportunities and yet how can this be implemented if their parents suffer financial inequality?

The idea of campaigning in the here and now for an adequate minimum wage is a good concept too, and I don't think it contradicts the argument for the future of equal pay for all, its just one of the steps on the way, just as narrowing the gap between classifications or differences in wage rates is another step in the right direction.

The usual people say in the end of these debates, against the equal pay idea, are:

1. "Of course, I agree with you, but the rest of the world doesn't!"
   As if that's an argument on the merits or otherwise of the concept.

2. "It's all very idealistic, but totally impractical."
   One would think "idealism" was a rude word, and one would think that "Idealism" meant "Impractical" - it doesn't. If people want it to work it can work, because the MECHANICS of the thing are the very least of our worries.

3. "We will never see it in our lifetime."
   This can be said of world peace, but it doesn't stop people declaring themselves for peace, or even from demonstrating for it. So what's the difference? If you believe in something, its your duty to say it, even at the risk of being called a "Bloody idealist".

(VRAB, No. 4, Sept.-Oct., 1975)

4. What Do Anarchists Suggest We Do? (Draft leaflet for discussion)

1. Anarchists admit that governments can make life harder or easier for the ordinary working people, but they do not think that the sort of society they desire can come about through any orderly process of parliamentary change. Hence anarchists consider work within the industrial wing of the labour movement much more important than work within its political wing. Anarchist industrial work does not mean trying to take over unions and capture executive positions but means developing rank and file activity and creating consciously anarchist militants. Everyone, of course, claims to be for improved rank and file activity at the shop, enterprise and regional level because this is the only way one will create factory committees and workers councils will arise 'spontaneously' in a crisis situation.

Left-wing activity in the unions has hitherto centred on militant wage struggles or on leadership-initiated political campaigns having little immediate relevance to the members' work situation. Insofar as political issues have been raised this has been done in a manipulative fashion and a separation has been maintained between political and economic issues. Anarchists believe that revolutionary union strategy demands an integration of political and economic issues and that the centre piece of such an integrated strategy is the struggle for control. A working-class which is not accustomed to demanding control of production - not just at the micro-level of the shop or enterprise, but at the macro-social level as well - will never produce a socialist revolution even if for a time power should accidentally fall into its lap. The struggle for workers control at all levels is a crucial prerequisite of proletarian revolution.

Today only the more retarded socialist sects still regard "nationalisation without compensation" as the working-class demand. The workers - many of whom work for the public sector - are understandably not impressed. Because nationalisation is so obviously a dead issue as far as agitational purposes go, the left tends in practice to drop back into pure and simple trade unionism with wages as the central agitational issue. In private industry this may still plausibly be represented as class struggle despite the ambiguities introduced by monopolistic pricing and the fragmentation of the work force into many different unions each pursuing their own members' interests. In the public sector it cannot be so represented. The public sector is a non-capitalist monopoly; there are no capitalist profits for wages to eat into and increased wage costs, whether met from revenue or taxation, are met at the expense of other workers unless the government meets them by means of charges or taxes falling on capital alone. Whilst the state is a capitalist state it is in no way weakened by paying higher wages even if any particular government wishes to avoid doing so. For these reasons any pure wages struggle in the public sector is reactionary; it objectively pits one section of the working class against all others. It is even tactically erroneous if it does not present itself as simultaneously a struggle to improve services or put forward popularly acceptable means of meeting increased costs. (Of course, such a struggle may be "just" - in the sense of comparative wage justice -- but for the left to put forward such arguments would be a complete capitulation to pure and simple trade unionism and bourgeois ideology.)

Instead wages struggles in the public sector should be developed in the context of comprehensive counter-planning; one element of which is the abolition of public service bureaucracies. Only by establishing working class control of public instrumentalities can workers in the public sector point the way forward for those in private employment.

These three things· the creation of inter-union rank and file co-operation; the re-orientation about the issue of control; and the development of working-class counter-planning are not only important as organisational and cultural prerequisites of revolution and socialism but are also elements in the development of a continuing situation of social, political and economic crisis. Such a crisis can only end in the quasi-economic liquidation of capitalism or in a direct assault on the working-class - an assault whose defeat would, under these conditions, mean the final expropriation of the capitalists. Temporary defeat for the workers is possible but they, unlike the capitalists, are necessary for production.

2. Simply because modern society is dominated by the economy and because capitalism is fundamentally a form of economic organisation, economic strategy takes first place in revolutionary thought. Despite this the state today occupies a quite different place in social life from that it occupied last century. This is particularly true of states such as the Australian one which rather than being simple executives of the bourgeoisie are instruments of the incorporation of labour (and various other groups) in a national consensus. The modern state is no longer an alien governing apparatus standing above or apart from society, rather by a multitude of official and semi-official organisations, committees and initiatives it tries to re-penetrate society to mediate and absorb its non-economic conflicts. (The Australian state's role in the mediation and canalisation of economic conflicts is classic but differs somewhat from its recent initiatives.) The modern state - capitalist in nature, social-democratic in government and participatory in ideology - attempts to re-insert iself in society by the integration of previously independent organisations into its planning and control structure, by the integration of local organisations into the lower reaches of its bureaucracy and by the financing of the activities of popular movements and non-governmental organisations. In Australia the examples that spring to mind include the Australian Assistance Plan, International Women's Year, the projected training college for trade union officials and state aid for non-government schools. Furthermore reflection shows the generally negative effects of these governmental initiatives; negative from the point of view of the people concerned but positive from the point of view of the government. If, as is likely, these sorts of government initiative continue, a major task of the left will become the exposure of the bureaucratic and rhetoric and social-democratic illusions. This however can only be done by a struggle within the organisation forms created by the statisation of society and by strategic counter-initiatives to governmental planning. The revolutionisation of society requires the exploitation of all possible points of stress; where the government discerns an area requiring integration a possible fissure must be presumed to exist.

3. The anarchist programme demands democracy and equality; it requires that physical differences and technical skills be no source of social, political or economic inequality, much less that religious, cultural or national differences should be such. Thus anarchism demands militant opposition to sexual, religious, racial or national discrimination but not to the extent of denying the right of sexually, religiously, racially or nationally subjugated groups to organise around the fact of their subjugation. Whilst anarchism looks to the self-activity of the masses and the victory of the working-class it recognises that both 'masses' and 'working-class' are abstract categories whilst these forms of subjugation persist. The concrete existence of these categories depends on a struggle against the forms of discrimination and modes of subjugation existing within the masses and working-class. The particular forms of this struggle cannot be laid down in advance.

(VRAB, No. 4, Sept.-Oct., 1975)

5. Unions, Damned Unions and the A.C.O.A.

The Australian Workers Union (AWU) recently attempted to set up a branch for retail sales managers who, it said, were overworked, underpayed and subjected to very heavy job pressure from both below and above. The managers did not accept the AWU offer, but this event illustrates two important features of modern society that are not generally discussed:

1. the tendency of "proletarianisation" of the lower and middle managerial stratum, e.g. retail sales manager, line managers. This tendency is increased by the growth of large organisations which may be owned and managed from overseas (multinationals), because of the spatial separation of top management and the operations areas, and the need for a well defined heirachical division of labor necessary for such large organisations to function.

2. the tendency for some sections of the managerial stratum to become "unionised". Managers who organised into unions see themselves as having interests (with respect to wages and conditions) which are separate from the interests and ideology of the enterprise that they work for.

While unions were once exclusively the organisation of the industrial working class, formed when capitalist society was clearly divided between capital and labour, this is no longer the case. In modern capitalist society there is a blurred distinction between capital and labour, a declining number of manual workers and an increasing number of non-manual workers, and a plethora of unions and associations representing working people from scientists up to garbage collectors. Below is an attempt at typology of unions:

1. Craft Unions, e.g. Plasterers Union. These are generally small unions, often requiring that members had a trade qualification. They are faced with declining memberships as more and more craftsmen work for themselves and because of the inroads of Industrial Unions.

2. Industrial Unions, e.g. Amalgamated Metal Workers Union. These are based on an industry (e.g. metal industry), are often large and often politically active.

3. General Unions, e.g. AWU. These are based on workers in several industries, both manual and non-manual workers.

4. Non-manual proletariat unions, e.g. Federated Clerks Union. These represent clerical and administrative workers at the lowest levels. However, unlike the members in the craft, industrial and general unions (with a few exceptions) members can be promoted in the organization (e.g. Insurance Office) where they work and at a certain level in the hierachy are no longer represented by this type of union.

5. Supervisors Unions, e.g. Stationmasters' Association. These are usually small unions in industry where the membership consists of supervisors, foremen and lower level managers. The membership may be either manual or non-manual workers.

6. Professional Unions, e.g. Teaching Unions. These are the most militant of the non-manual unions and, apart from representing their members' interests regarding wages and conditions, are involved in issues relating to the quality of work and the associated political aspects. While these unions may represent members at most levels of the hierachy (e.g. the school) the supervisor-supervised relationship at work is not important.

7. Scientific and Professional Associations. These are concerned simply with maintaining parity of wages and conditions (and sometimes with improving them) relative to the rest of the community. Supervisors and supervised may belong to the same union but the relationship is not usually important. The members may have to fight administrators with respect to both work content and working conditions.

8. Public Service Unions, e.g. Administrative and Clerical Officers Association. These are administrative public service unions where the membership consists of both managers and managed and where that relationship is important. A member may find (to her/his chagrin) that one's supervisor is also one's union representative. There is a coincidence of membership in both the office and the union except that there is no compulsory unionism. To achieve promotion however, it is usually necessary to be a member of the union as the unions are integrated into the public service promotion procedures. Public service unions also negotiate wages and conditions improvements with public service boards (representing the government but whose members may also belong to the same union), but these also flow to non-union members.

In the above brief typology of unions, the main point I want to suggest is that public service unions such as the A.C.O.A. and the Victorian Public Service Association (V.P.S.A.) are completely irrelevant in the struggle for socialist objectives; and usually espouse conservative policies vis a vis the role of the public service and its relationship to politics and the rest of society. In the other categories of unions (with the possible exception of scientific and professional associations), the unions are meaningful in the struggle for socialist objectives in that they are an expression of and medium to achieve, working peoples aspirations and goals; and the fight for rank and file control of unions where it does not exist is a socialist objective. No such value applies to the public service unions. In working out goals and strategies for activists in the public service, one can almost (but not completely) ignore the unions. I will look at the strategy for activism in the public services, but first I will outline the structural-functional aspects of public services, with particular reference to the Australian Government Service (A.G.S.) which is the most "advanced" of our public bureaucracies.

"Employees" in the A.G.S. are divided into four divisions as follows:

1st division: Permanent heads of departments plus some other specialised officers - salary approx. $35,000.

2nd division: Top management and policy makers - salary range $20,000 - $30,000.

3rd division: Clerks and middle management, where the bulk of administrative work is supervised and executed (with the help of 4th division officers). Promotion proceeds from the bottom of the 3rd division (salary for 21 year olds is approx. $6,000) to the top of the 3rd division (salary approx. $18,000) and thence to 2nd division. Entrance qualification is the H.S.C. or equivalent.

4th division: Clerical assistants, technicians and others. With a few exceptions, workers in the 4th division cannot be promoted into the 3rd division. They carry out the bulk of the routine administrative work (making them the "proletariat" of the A.G.S.) and also work in manual and service areas.

There are unions representing the 2nd, 3rd and 4th divisions. Those representing the 2nd and 3rd division (the A.C.O.A. being the 3rd division officers union) fall into type 8 (above) while the 4th division officers

union (the Australian Public Service Association) falls somewhere between type 4 and type 8.

The A.G.S. is structured as two overlapping hierachies as seen in the following diagram.

First division

Second Division

Third division

Fourth division

It is staffed (with a few exceptions) by officers who commenced work on leaving school and who have worked their way up from the bottom levels of the hierarchy in competition with other public servants but not "outsiders".

Other public services, and also statutory organisations (e.g. S.E.C., Postal and Telecommunications Commissions) are organised similarly to the A.G.S. although they may not be divided into divisions (which may disappear from the A.G.S. as a result of the Royal Commission into Australian Government Administration, currently being held).

Governments are elected and unelected. Public services persist and are very resistant to change. Some factors which produce and reinforce the conservative nature of public services are:

1. While there are objective manager-managed relationships with respect to specific tasks, there is no permanency of these with respect to people (all are potential managers). There is a different perception of "class struggle" and alienation as that in the industrial work situation.

2. Competition for promotion is built into the system; this acts as a brake on solidarity.

3. Although some outside appointments are made to specialised areas, e.g. engineering, psychology, public services are "closed shops". As new entrants are accepted at the bottom levels only, they are socialised into the system - no alternative socialising force exists. Any attempt to open up the administrative areas of public services to "outsiders", is usually met with opposition and hostility, especially from the unions.

4. Working conditions and salaries in the A.G.S. are good when compared with those in private industry - these do not provide a reason to "rock the boat".

5. Anyone who does "rock the boat", may find promotion denied - by both management and union representatives.

In the A.G.S., there are other factors contributing to its conservative nature. These are:

1. Twenty three years of ultra conservative government. The public service plays an important role in deciding as well as carrying out policies when a conservative government is in power. Thus politically conservative public servants tend to get appointed to the top positions in the A.G.S.

2. Because of the permanency of officers in the A.G.S., the A.L.P. inherited a very conservative public service. However the A.L.P. in government puts much less emphasis on public service policy making than the conservatives and a greater emphasis on other areas, e.g. political, community. When trying to introduce changes and reforms, the A.L.P. came up against the conservative silent opposition - the reluctance of the top echelons to implement the changes or refusal to give adequate advice, e.g. the Treasury. To counter this the A.L.P. set up commissions, e.g. Social Welfare Commission, which were outside of the A.G.S. structure and to which political appointments could be made. These Commissions can both decide and implement policies. The reaction of parts of the A.G.S. tends to be defensive and unco-operative - they see the role of the A.G.S. as being usurped by Commissions and outside advisors.

Public services are not politically neutral - that they are is one of the great myths put across by conservative governments. The public services should be recognised for what they are - bastions of power which <u>usually</u> favor the conservative forces in our society.

However, despite what I have already written about the idea of a dispassionate career (which is the theory), there are many hard-working people in the A.G.S. committed and involved in work that provides service to the public and who believe in working for progressive changes in policies and structure. And it is in the area of commitment of people to the (genuine) services that they are providing that we must look to for a strategy for libertarian activism.

In a socialist society, the public services as we know them would not exist, but we would still have people working in areas that provide "service", including the scientific, technical and administrative areas. The basis for action should be that the public services are not politically neutral and disinterested but that they should be politically committed; that people working in jobs should be committed to what they are doing (and "what they are doing" should be part of the continuous debate).

In specific terms, some of the immediate goals could be:

1. Breaking down the public service hierarchy (at least functionally) to work groups or collectives, with group control of decision making in its area, i.e. equal power.

2. Each work group should develop lines of communication and organisation with other groups on a basis of "organisation from below".

3. Opening up the public services to all who have something to contribute, instead of maintaining them as "career services".

4. Breaking down the operator - client relationships between public servants and recipients of services - relationships should be based on people as people rather than people acting out predefined and accepted roles. We should recognise that people have needs that may or may not be able to be satisfied by public services but at least they should not be subject to coercion (gentle or otherwise); for example social services should not be based on the role of satisfying job requirements of society and getting people back to work.

In general terms we should aim at radicalisation of the public service. We should fight against the myth of a politically neutral public service - a myth that is pushed equally by conservative governments and public service unions. The recently elected Liberal-N.C.P. government will try to destroy some of the reforms introduced by the A.L.P. government in the A.G.S., e.g. freedom of speech by government employees. (They are already slashing expenditure on the A.G.S. resulting in measures that hit the lower level 3rd division workers but have little effect on the public service "policy makers" at the top). The immediate struggle in the A.G.S. may be a fight against "turning back the clock". This struggle should be linked with the general struggle for socialist objectives.

(VRAB, No. 5, Jan.-Feb., 1976)

APPENDIX: MELBOURNE ANARCHISM AND THE TENSIONS IN THE F.A.A.

1. STATEMENT ON THE MARCH/APRIL ANARCHIST BULLETIN.

On February 2nd the second Victorian Regional Anarchist meeting accepted the organisational platform adopted at the national conference held in Sydney in January as the basis of its adherence to the Federation of Australian Anarchists. Earlier at the national conference the group which had previously produced the FAA Bulletin had agreed to rotate production of the Bulletin with other groups.

The conditions of these agreements (insofar as they concern the FAAB) were twofold: on the one hand all groups federating into the FAA agreed to distribute articles by other member groups and individuals and to print such articles in the FAAB if they were producing it; on the other hand the groups producing the FAAB agreed to print only articles consistent with the aims/membership statement (this being the definition of membership) and to return any other articles to the author(s) with a statement of the reasons for rejection.

In our view the Sydney group has failed to keep these agreements and has hence done a serious disservice to the growth of an anarchist movement in Australia.

Leaving aside the question of the quality of production of this issue - which may have been due to material circumstances although the lack of imagination is difficult to explain - it seems to us that the articles by V.V. and the letter by S.M. have little to do with the aims and objectives of the FAA - where they are not actually inconsistent with them - and that the letter from S.M. should not have been printed under any circumstances. In particular we would point to V.V.'s rejection of socialism and communism and his/her assumption that "anarchy" is compatible with the existence of Prime Ministers and private property or S.M.'s opposition to the FAA and its aims (e.g. his rejection of involvement in the working class or "conventional" activity.) Nor do we think that any anarchist publication should print calls for the bombing of "key people or buildings" especially when this is "justified" in terms of self-expression!

The effect of V.V.'s articles and S.M.'s letter can only be to bring the FAA and anarchism into disrepute with sympathetic socialists and others to whom the FAAB is currently distributed for their interest and to convince committed anarchists that it is a positive disadvantage to call oneself an anarchist and to be associated with anarchist organisations. Worse still the police and press can use letters such as S.M.'s to convict any anarchists they choose of mindless violence. The printing of such a letter can only be taken as a sign of irresponsibility and a most serious breach of solidarity.

The anarchist organisation is supposed to mirror in its federal structure the organisation of an anarchist society. The condition for the existence of a federal structure without central coercive powers is that the components respect agreements freely arrived at. The anarchist ideal is that central control will be replaced by self-control. If the members and component groups of an anarchist organisation cannot do this what hope is there for an anarchist society?
(Signed) : D.W. S.M. T.H. J.D. M.B.
I.D. M.T. L.H. C.M. M.S.

The Victorian Comrades who distribute the bulletins resolve that whilst they will distribute the current issue of the FAAB with the above statement (because the offending articles cannot be removed without removing other articles) they will not distribute material contrary to the January 9th agreement on the FAAB in the future.

Distribution: All Australian anarchist groups.

(Attachment to FAAB, No. 4, March-April, 1975.)

2. THE DEBATE IN MELBOURNE.

An Open Letter to Victorian Anarchists : AB

Since February, 1975 regular regional meetings have been held at Melbourne University each second mouth. Initially it appeared to other comrades and myself that the meetings could be of value. The sorts of justifications that were offered were to the type:

i) meetings would provide an opportunity to meet other comrades and apart from improving the sense of solidarity within Melbourne would provide a venue for sharing experiences, interests and activity, hopefuly leading to people finding others who are already working in areas where their own interests lie.

As a result of the earlier meetings lists of interest groups were drawn up for the purpose of initiating affinity groups, e.g. Education, Social Involvement (AAP), Men's Group, Party Politics (A.L.P.), Publications and others.

ii) Later it was suggested that these meetings could be used as an educative format. To achieve this it was suggested that papers be prepared, distributed, read and discussed. Some have actually reached the light of day.

Independently of how valuable these sorts of activities may be in themselves, the meetings are a failure. Since they are a failure they must be scrapped, not only because they have failed but also because of what might result if they were to continue.

The central problem is that of why there should be a regional meeting of anarchists. To me the only justification for a regional meeting is to decide on and then carry out actions that affect the region in general. Not only is there a problem of the appropriate level of action and therefore an appropriate level of organisation but there is a problem of any appropriate action whatsoever. With the exception of the men's group - which insists on continuing its isolationist existence - and the people who continue printing and publishing (it seems these people would have continued in their activity independently of any influx of new members, all other groups have ceased to function. From this point of view the meetings are providing neither inspiration nor personnel. A still more important feature of the meetings is that they are being substituted for actual political activity. Apart from the frustration caused by comrades who insist on demonstrating their political naivete, we could continue to attend these meetings till the world ends.

If the meetings were to serve any educative function then certain things would be required of the participants:

i) Do your homework! Have some idea of what you are talking about, realise the implications of what you are saying and, for the sake of sweet reason, don't talk for the sake of hearing your own voice.

ii) There must be some agreement on the value of our own education. There is no such agreement. We seem to insist that truth is determined by how loud we can yell or by how absolutely irrelevant we can make our statements. (If it fucks the mind it must be right!)

The only possible justification for the meetings would be that we were all involved in activity related to the fact that we must stay alive. The areas of political work are not hard to find. We all live in some urban or country community. Each community has its own immediate level of politics:

- city/shire council
- consumer co-operatives
  environmental problems
- communication with your neighbours.

We should also have some legitimate means by which we acquire the food, clothing and shelter to stay alive, i.e. work. (Work being another valid and necessary area of activity.)

At this stage I don't want to buy into a debate over "the right to be lazy" but I find it repugnant that the anarchist movement hypnotically attracts social parasites.

Once we establish some social base for our existence, and that base puts us back in touch with reality, only then will there be any justification for regional meetings. As a result I call on all comrades not to attend Melbourne regional meetings.

(VRAB, No. 3, July-Aug., 1975.)

Comment on meetings : DW

There have now been four Victorian regional anarchist meetings. These meetings have had their high and low points. However both attendance and participation at these meetings are decreasing and this suggests to me that the objectives of these meetings should be re-examined. Or perhaps examined, as the objectives have never been clearly stated.

My objective in this article is not however to define what I believe the objectives of the regional meeting to be. It is to make some general comments about the conduct and rationale of meetings where the people attending come from diverse backgrouds and are not in constant contact with each other.

Firstly, I believe that the objective of these meetings should be clearly defined, and clearly understood. If this is not the case such meetings tend to become confused, fall apart and lose the interest of many of those present (and these people may also be lost to the anarchist movement).

Secondly, the form of these meetings must be defined, and this follows from the objective. For example, a meeting may be called to hear reports, determine action, discuss theoretical or practical issues, or perhaps for a mixture of these or for some other reason. It is important that the form be clear and this usually leads to the need for an agenda. The agenda should be drawn up (by whom?) in consultation with those attending the meeting and should be distributed prior to the meeting.

Thirdly, I believe that these meetings are aided by having a chairperson. The functions of a chairperson should be:

1) to remind people of the objective of the meeting;

2) to keep the meeting to the agenda;

3) to involve people who feel too shy or too inhibited to participate fully in the discussions;

4) to prevent any individual or group from dominating the discussions to the exclusion of anyone else,

5) to organise such minute-taking, charting of discussion etc. as may be necessary.

It may be that the functions outlined above can be performed satisfactorily without having a chairperson. This may well be true from some types of meetings, especially where there are say, less than fifteen people present. However I am talking about a particular type of meeting (see above paragraph 2) where there is likely to be well over fifteen people present. Again I am not saying that a large number of people from diverse backgrounds cannot conduct a meeting satisfactorily without a chairperson. I believe however, that a chairperson often facilitates the flow of such meetings i.e. "achievements' per unit time will be greater, or, there will be less "wasted time". For people with a limited amount of time at their disposal this point is important.

If anyone believes that having someone chair a meeting is unanarchistic (or unlibertarian), it should be noted that (unanarchistic) meetings conducted according to rules have provisions to prevent the chairperson exceeding a charter of functions which are clearly defined. If that person becomes too autocratic, he/she can be censured or removed by a majority vote of that meeting (this is not an argument for majority rule). To a significant extent the chairperson is bound by the "will" of the meeting.

In our meetings it is also necessary for participants to be "tuned in" to the conduct of the meeting, to help the chairperson when there are difficulties, and to bring to her/his attention if she/he is ignoring some aspect of her/his functions e.g. if an individual is being ignored.

In summary, I believe that what I have written about meetings in general and about a particular type of meeting is not unlibertarian; rather it leads to good practice. Let me stress again the importance of having clear objectives, a well defined form or structure of the meeting, and an agenda that is discussed and circulated well in advance of the meetings where possible and appropriate. If this is done with the regional meeting we should find that they will be much more satisfying and worthwhile.

(VRAB, No. 3, July-August, 1975.)

Reply to AB : ID

The Victorian regional meetings were decided on by the people who attended the Victorian pre-conference on December 15. The suggestion was made by people who had been out of contact with the movement for the previous year or two; the suggesti was that only by having some such regular meeting would the movement exist at all. Since it was the largest and most representative meeting yet held in Victoria - some 50 of the 120 invited attending - its decision deserves respect. At the very least the decision to discontinue the meetings should be made by the meetings themselves and not be the result of a process of gradual decay as individuals decide to "vote with their feet".

Since this newsletter goes to many more people than have ever attended the meetings (and to many who have contacted the anarchists since the December meeting) I should like to correct certain elements of A.B.'s uniformly dismal picture. For instance, in talking of the movement one should mention that /* Press is continuing to function and that more people are involved in its operation; that "Acracia" is in its fourth year of publication and is still developing; that both national and Victorian bulletins are continuing to come out more or less regularly; that at least one political education group has met and other specialised study groups are in the process of formation; that a women's group has met to consider problems and activities of anarchist women; that important back-up material such as the 16 page "Reading guide to anarchism" and the 89 page collection of Melbourne Anarchist documents and articles have been prepared and are available to people who wish to undertake serious private study.

It is fairly obvious criticism that these things involve only an active core group who would be in contact even if the regional meetings were to cease. However, a number of people who are not in this core but are politically active elsewhere do (or have) attended the regional meetings and it does seem of value that those involved in maintaining the organisational/publicational existence of Melbourne anarchism meet the people they are, presumably, doing it for. Furthermore whether because of, or in spite of the regional meetings and other face to face encounters, there do seem to be people active in the movement who were not in contact last year. If the regional meetings are scrapped the bulletins will become the only means by which people are related to the movement and it is hard to see how a bulletin can be used to set up new affinity groups even if it can be used to introduce new people to existing ones. (Here one should reflect on the fact that the very concept of an affinity group is anti-expansionary, one only enters it by being in some personal relation to the members. The only equivalent we have of a "branch", i.e. a unit anyone can join, is the regional meeting itself. The structure we give to the anarchist movement may very well stop it ever growing. People active in the movement should try to think themselves into the position of those contacting it for the first time.)

I don't know what the experience of other people is but there are many people that I have never met except at regional meetings and the May Day demonstrations. If this is true of other people as well then we will certainly need some structure or activity to replace the regional meetings if they are scrapped.

Like A.B. I sometimes despair when I go to meetings and hear people talking without either thought, knowledge or personal experience on any matter other than the one at hand. However, I can only think of three people who have done this.

Usually people try to be to the point (and then stay with it too long) but have failed to think critically about what they are saying. This is still annoying for people who have thought about the subject but only time will overcome this. Also like A.B. I find it difficult to take the parasitic types who tend to attach themselves to the fringe of the anarchist movement but here again it is only fair to point out that such people are becoming much less significant in the movement.

The anarchist movement in Victoria is now larger than ever before, produces more and better publications than ever before, and has contact with a wider circle of sympathisers than ever before. This at least gives us a basis for development. Amongst those who have been in the movement several years there is increasing awareness of the need for concrete political activity, realistic study of Australian society and rethinking of anarchist theory. Individuals are now active in each of these areas. A third element of some importance is that there is an increasing availability of both classical and modern anarchist writings in libraries and bookshops. This may mean that people contacting the movement will have a more sophisticated conception of anarchism.

For the above reasons I do not think that the obvious problems arising from differences in age, level of understanding or degree of practical commitment should lead us to a premature liquidation of the one activity we have that is potentially movement-wide It may be that it is impossible to sustain a unified anarchist movement under current Australian conditions and that anarchism can only exist through the medium of small groups that come into existence and die away relatively independently of each other. Even if the conditions A.B. and previous writers have mentioned as necessary for fruitful regional meetings were fulfilled it may still be the case that an independently organised anarchist movement is not possible on a long-term basis. I think that it is far too early to tell this and that our efforts should be directed towards the goal of a unified movement until pressing reasons lead us to abandon this quest and to work out our anarchist salvation as individuals or in small groups.

(VRAB, No. 3, July-Aug., 1975)

Open Reply to AB : HW

When I first read AB's article I decided to make a statement at Sunday's meeting, but on reflection decided instead to write something with a view to having it published in the next VRAB.

Almost straight off, AB decides that since Regional Meetings don't work the way he thinks they should work, then they should be scrapped. This, to me, is a classic example of immediate negation with no thought of any other alternative. I would have thought that by now anarchists would have gotten over the notion of black/white - right/wrong: and would be more prepared to look at a situation, develop its good points and do away with its bad. This is not the case with AB

We then move on to a step by step critique of the various groups which have folded. The men's group is accused of "isolationist existence". Any understanding of the men's group will show that these groups are, by their nature, introspective and subsequently isolationist, especially during their formative stages. However AB will be pleased to know that the men's group has totally integrated itself with 'ordinary life' and no longer exists. It folded in late June.

The other groups are referred to in one phrase - 'all other groups have folded'. Yes, this is the case. The Education Cell folded after about 6 weeks of meeting each Friday night at /*. For most of these meetings only 4 people came with any consistency and on the last night we decided that since we all live in the same house, we may as well talk at home and save $1.20 each, for each Friday night. One of the most remarkable things about the Education Cell was the fact that none of the teachers involved in the anarchist movement came! Nor did any of the students. Of the 4 who came, 2 were unemployed and 2 were at Preston (these two later left the movement as a result of their experience with Victorian anarchism). Presumably these teachers are taking more of an industrial attitude to teaching, rather than an experiential attitude, and are probably getting into union politics and trying to effect change from the top. This tactic, I regard as unrealistic and we have a 44% illiteracy rate at form 4 to show for this sort of attitude.

As regards the AAP, two meetings ago, we organised a meeting at our house, at which only one person arrived. He was at that stage pulling out of the AAP and spent the night discouraging involvement and arguing about anything but the AAP. Also I followed up some of the hints he gave us and was frankly put off.

To sum up, out of the five activities mentioned by AB I was an instigator of three and these folded, not due to any lack of commitment on our behalf, but through general lack of interest. Then of course, we come to the end of the paragraph which states "comrades who insist on showing political naivete". On this statement, I have several comments: (i) if I wanted to be a politician, I would be in a union or the ALP; (ii) as an anarchist I feel that people should be encouraged to express their viewpoint, regardless of the lack of sophistication of their expression. How can you (AB) expect people to say anything if they are only to be criticised for making you suffer (sob!) through such 'political naivete'.

The rest of the article I agree with, as I agree with DW's article and most of ID's. One point, however, which occurs in both AB & ID's articles is the reference to 'social parasites'. Just what exactly is a 'social parasite'? Is co one who shoplifts, evades taxes, doesn't wash, extorts student funds; or is co one who works as a wage earner for the minimum amount of time needed to support coself? One of the tenets of anarchist philosophy deals with the alienation of abstracted work relationships; apparently if co expresses resentment of being treated like shit on the factory floor or behind the shop counter by working only when co needs to (or maybe not at all), then is co regarded as a 'social parasite'?!? How Borgie can you get?! Will the next step be 'militarisation of the proletariat'? Perhaps this is so, as AB also states 'work'

as 'valid & necessary area of activity' being 'legitimate means for acquiring food, clothing and shelter'. 'Work' here is obviously wage labour work, in the employ of some other person; no recognition of the fact that housework, for example, os 'work' - only product labour appears to be regarded as valid.

In conclusion I would like to endorse DW's article as it is both critical and constructive without the moralistic ravings of AB and to a lesser extent ID.

(VRAB No. 4, Sept.-Oct., 1975)

1. I did not call for the abandonment of the regional meetings because they were not working the way I wanted them to work. The meetings were not working even according to the way other people had suggested. It is not so much that I did not support the idea of the formation of an education group but that that group ceased to function. Also it is not that I did not think that there was no need for education among comrades. The fact of the matter is that the education or idea sharing was not taking place. There is another point that you overlook in my argument. Not only are these positive activities not taking place but since they are not, a certain amount of anxiety and animosity is being generated within the movement which can only be considered as being negative and therefore discouraging.

2. I am grateful that you verify the accuracy of my statements concerning the nature and final demise of the affinity groups that eminated from the regional meetings. Relevant to this perhaps I did not emphasise strongly enough the point that it appears to me that affinity group formation should have preceded regional meetings thereby placing the meetings on a more substantial basis for discussion, idea exchange, co-ordination and planning for future activity.

3. The education group is probably the best exemplification of the arguments that I was putting forward. HW, you have rightly diagnosed the failings of the education group.

*It was a talking group therefore there was no scope for the planning and execution of activity orientated programs starting with an analysis of the nature and therefore the problems of our education system and leading onto

i) Distribution of the ideas contained in the analysis

ii) Recruitment of students and teachers in agreement with the analysis

iii) Further direction decided by the extended group.

*The people in the group were not directly related to the area of education. This situation suggests that

i) The teachers and students in the movement should perhaps rethink their revolutionary priorities.

ii) The people in the group might look upon their activity as discussion of an interest much as other people have hobbies rather than working and organising around something that is vital to their livelihood.

4. Yes, we can adopt an experiential attitude to education. It is unfortunate that "an industrial attitude" is set up as such a hollow counter example. Gone are the naive days when 'radicals' decided to work through the system to get to the top to initiate change. If there is to be change in the education system then it must come from and have impact at the most immediate level, i.e. student, academic and non-academic staff. Given, the way the world is, teachers only find legitimacy with students at schools. That is where activity and organisation must take place.

5. It is unfortunate that the revolution must be equated with a hobby that lasts only as long as the 'interest'. Militancy and activity are a way of living, not just filling in spare time. I am no puritan therefore pleasure and stimulation are things that are important to me but they have meaning only when they are in tune with the needs and dynamics of the society I live in.

6. In terms of "political naivete", I do not criticise comrade HW for being wrong but for being so egotistically and so arrogantly wrong. Are we to deny the value of knowledge and the value of clarity of thought? I think not.

Not only do I expect but I demand that comrades do their revolutionary homework. By the time we are already talking with comrades or other members of the public it is too late to formulate our opinions. We must have the information and the ability to communicate at our disposal. Admittedly both these things are cumulative but this does not excuse the lack of humility that is displayed by some comrades while 'running off at the mouth'.

7. A 'social parasite' is one who lives off the work and effort of a productive member of society. Throughout the world there are more and more people living off the productive efforts of workers. This group contains not only the bourgeoisie, the managers, the office workers, teachers and students (mainly tertiary), but also the professional dole collectors.

Unemployment relief or poor relief finds its origins in the poor laws of Britain of the 18th century. According to these laws money was to be paid to people who were out of work or unable to work so that these people wouldn't starve to death. The workers movement throughout the world have fought for social welfare to be improved so that they no longer suffer the hardships brought about by the competitiveness of the labour market under the capitalist and post-capitalist mode of economic organisation.

It is only the bourgeoisie that can afford to be lazy, so the question more to the point is - how bourgeois are you HW?

(VRAB No. 4, Sept.-Oct., 1975.)

3. DIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIAN ANARCHISM ID

Despite the formal unity represented by the aims/membership statement printed on the front of the FAAB Australian anarchism remains regionally diverse and there are few signs of emerging theoretical and practical unity within regions let alone between them. This is hardly surprising given the diversity of ways people can come to anarchism and the number of meanings they can give the word, but it is not always productive of the growth of the movement.

Perhaps most anarchists in Australia will feel that diversity is good per se. Perhaps it is, but I am only concerned here with the positive and negative effects of certain types of anarchism on the development of a revolutionary movement in Australia. This does not mean that I want to purge the FAA of 'non-revolutionary elements' - if anything these are the more important parts of the existing FAA.

To speak bluntly there are certain tendencies within the movement which (no doubt unintentionally) succeed in making anarchism unattractive to ordinary people, i.e. the people anarchism claims to be about. These negative tendencies are:

1. individualist anarchism e.g. VV in the last FAAB
2. 'happiness is a warm bomb - anarchism e.g. SM in the last FAAB
3. counter culture anarchism e.g. the anarchism of those who live by drug-peddling or by receiving multiple dole cheques under false names.
4. ultra or chaotist anarchism e.g. the anarchism of those (usually anarchist communists in theory) who oppose joining any organisations because they are 'authoritarian' or 'bureaucratic' or who refuse to work because it involves accepting authority. To the above one should add.....
5. police anarchism - which usually disguises itself as ultra-anarchism and tries to promote bombings.

It should be obvious why working people fail to be attracted by the above sorts of 'anarchism' and in so far as it is the above tendencies which form the public image of anarchism anarchist movements will fail to make much headway.

The two basic subdivisions of serious anarchism might be called political anarchism and social action anarchism, By political anarchism I mean a serious concern with the theoretical study of the problems of achieving an anarchist revolution and the attempt to practically implement the conclusions. By social anarchism I mean a serious commitment to achieving libertarian change now in those areas where it is possible and the acceptance of the validity of achieving partial social reforms through self-organisation, direct action and pressure group politics. The distinction between the two is that the political anarchist is mainly concerned with the conditions necessary for the achievement of social freedom in the long run whereas the social action anarchist is interested in the expansion of social freedom (and social welfare) now. These are not opposed goals but they often lead to the choice of different practical activities.

The difference between serious anarchism and the negative tendencies listed above is that between anarchism with aims and an aimless anarchism, Serious anarchism necessitates choices and hence rational analysis and calculation; anarchism without aims must reduce itself to self expression if not to self-indulgence. But this latter means confusing the conditions that anarchist action aims to bring about with those existing today. It is to make anarchism into ideological support of the present society.

Assuming that such negative tendencies could be overcome it is interesting to look at the relations between political and social action anarchism, i.e. between revolutionary here and now libertarianism. As I said above these are not opposed; I now wish to argue that they are complementary.

If we look at the problem from the side of social action anarchism we must recognise that not only is an overall social standpoint implied in the changes we want to make but that the changes themselves will both require and lead to further social changes. One cannot achieve the eliberation of women, defeat authoritarianism in education, house the homeless, give the poor self-respect, overcome the social and economic disadvantages of blacks and migrants, liberate homosexuals etc. without leading to massive shifts in the power composition and consciousness of various social groups. Such social changes will involve the possibility of considerable social instability and the instability caused by even the partial achievement of such reforms may lead to political reaction. It is this possibility which necessitites an analysis of the political instability caused by massive and accelerated social change i.e. necessitates a theory of revolution.

Approaching now from the side of political anarchism the problem is that of creating or transforming social forces whose struggles will then succeed in overthrowing the political system. No such social forces exist at present in Australia. The industrial working class is divided by trade, industry, sex and nationality; nor can a libertarian revolution succeed without the participation of salaried workers and workers in the tertiary sector The work of political anarchists in bringing about a working people's revolution thus depends on abolishing many of the divisions that social action anarchists are trying to overcome. Furthermore this revolution can only be successful given certain cultural preconditions. Anarchist socialism does not grow spontaneously out of revolutionary upheaval - if anything authoritarian governments are the natural product of revolutionary upheaval. To obtain anarchism one needs long-term cultural and political preparation. The sorts of changes that social action anarchists aim at are essential preconditions of anarchist revolution.

For the above reasons, I believe that both social action anarchism and political anarchism are necessary to the FAA and necessary to each other. Ideally one would hope that all anarchists would be both but there are only 24 hours in a day and most people who work for a living can only manage one serious commitment at a time. The problem then is that of persuading all people associated with the FAA to take up some avenue of concrete activity, whilst remaining receptive to the views of people engaged in other sorts of activity.

There seems to be three sorts of anarchists represented in the FAA. There are those who have come to anarchism through other political groups or who would be in other political groups if there was no anarchist movement. There are those that have arrived at anarchism by a process of generalisation of their existing social concerns. Finally there are those who become anarchists by philosophically accepting its theory (which is not the same thing as accepting anarchism because of its conformity with one's lifestyle). For those who have come to anarchism philosophically, or as an alternative political movement, there are considerable problems of finding avenues of activity which seem worthwhile. Anarchism seems such a remote objective that there is a strong pressure to treat it as a 'beautiful ideal' or to withdraw to an individualist anarchist lifestyle. For people engaged in revolutionary activities, desirable for their own sake, this problem does not arise. Nor does it arise for working political anarchists for whom self activity on the job is immediately political. The solution is for anarchists to leave their student or youth ghettos and enter ordinary life. Only then will they become socially and politically significant.

(FAAB No. 5, June, 1975.)